

*THE NEW COVENANT*  
*A LOST SECRET*

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ANNA ROSS



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With loving greetings.

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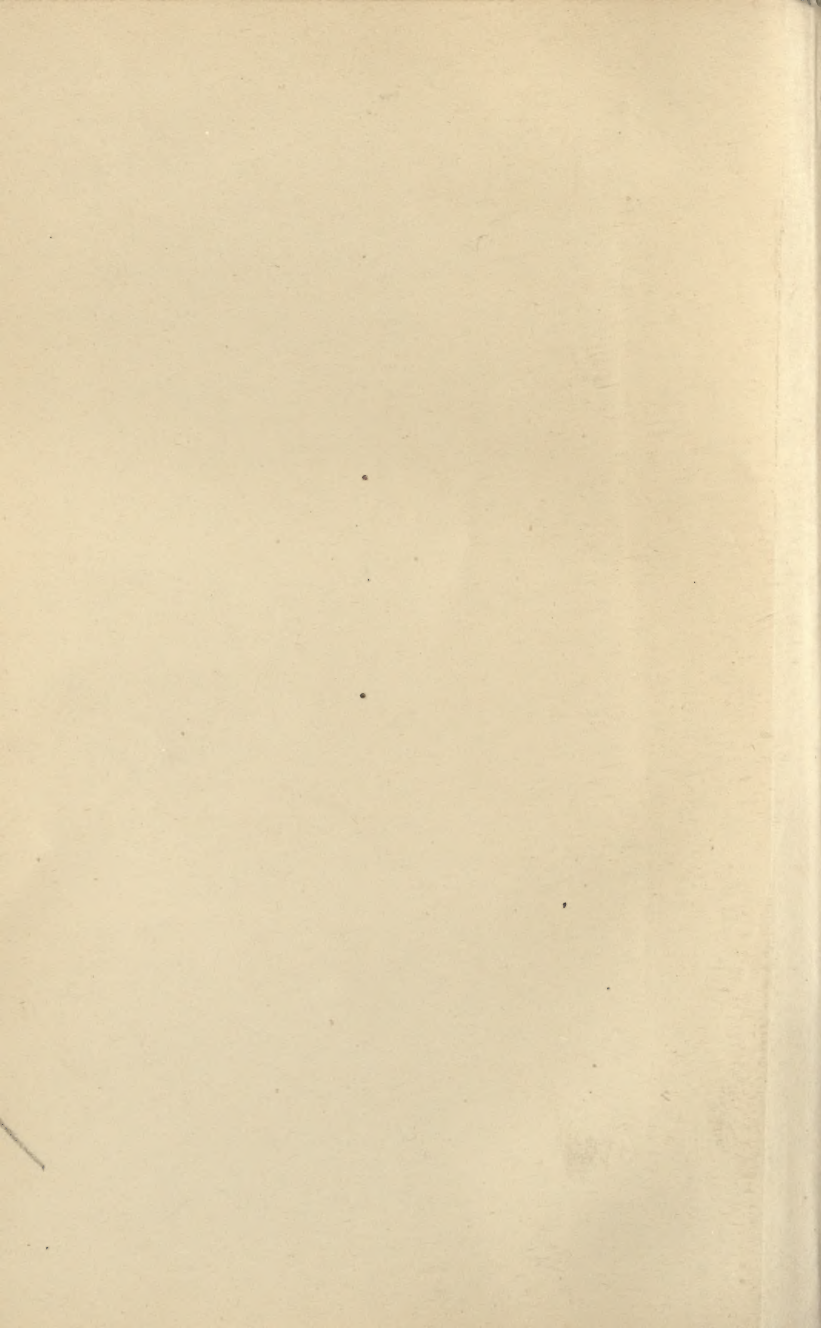
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# THE NEW COVENANT A LOST SECRET

BY

ANNA ROSS

*Author of "Bell's Story," and "The Man with the Book;  
or, Memoirs of John Ross, of Brucefield."*

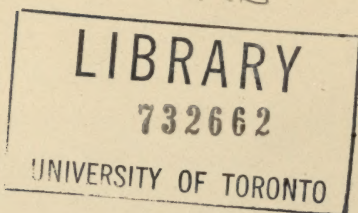
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## PREFACE.

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THE best preface to this little book may be a brief statement of its argument, that the reader may know what to expect, and so may be able to watch, as chapter follows chapter, whether the different points of the position are proved or not.

That argument may be stated as follows: 1st. That we, as Christ's, have fallen heir to a covenant with God, which gives us legal right before Him to all the privileges covered by the three terms of that covenant. 2nd. That the failure to utilize this tremendous fact is the cause of the feebleness and failure of the Church of Christ. 3rd. That the way to actual power and victory in Christian life and service is to apprehend and utilize this covenant.

Are these things true, or are they not? These are weighty questions.

The situation is illustrated by the case of a man holding a cheque for a million pounds on the Bank of England, but who, either because he has forgotten its existence, or is unbelieving as to its value, or ignorant as to how to present it, or because he rather likes poverty and its associations, leaves his precious cheque a bit of unused paper in his vest pocket, and consequently lives a pauper and dies a failure, leaving a generation of failures behind him.

Does this illustration fit, or does it not? These are most practical questions.

If, in following the lines of this little book, the reader should meet with any truth that is not familiar, let me whisper a word of counsel as to how to treat it. Be very careful first that it *is* a truth; and, if it is, *let it in at the first reading*, and take a little time to see that it is kindly accommodated, with room enough to breathe and work in.

If, according to prevailing custom, you recognize it, but, instead of taking time to welcome



it into its place at once, you let it stand waiting until you read further on, and see if there is something else interesting, then it is almost a certainty that that first truth will never knock effectively at your door again.

Jesus Christ has given the same counsel very often, and very briefly: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

ANNA ROSS.

Ottawa, September 15th, 1901.





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## INTRODUCTION.

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“THE secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.” From the laws of Hebrew parallelism it can be inferred that a knowledge of that covenant is “*the* secret of the Lord.” May we go a step further and infer that a Christian who is trying to live a Christian life without a knowledge of this “secret” is like a baker who is spending himself trying to make bread, while he knows not the secret of its manufacture? or like a tailor who toils from dawn to dusk working away at suits while still in ignorance as to the secret of making a fit? Miserable failure, we know, must be the constant experience of the tradesman. How about the Christian?

That the knowledge of God’s covenant really



does occupy this relation to the Christian life has been a growing conviction with the writer for some years.

As, perhaps, the best "Introduction" to the following papers on the subject, I would like to record the steps by means of which I have been myself "introduced" to this Magna Charta of our Christian rights and privileges.

About thirty years ago, in days of early perplexity and failure, I was much touched and encouraged in studying and appropriating the 143rd Psalm. It seemed positively written for me. *Each clause* was fitted to my case. But it was from the first verse that the possibility of taking a *covenant hold* upon God shined out. "Hear my prayer, O Lord, *in thy faithfulness* answer me, and *in thy righteousness*."

"What bold words these are to take before God." These were my thoughts. "Does David mean to imply that for God not to answer him would be unfaithfulness, would be positive unrighteousness?" At first it seemed wrong even to think such a thought. But the plea was written out in the Bible, and a glimpse was given of the

glorious power of it. That was my first lesson concerning "the secret of the Lord."

The second was like unto it. 1 John, 1-9, had been familiar from childhood. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." *Merciful to forgive*—that was the old thought. *Faithful and just to forgive, and to cleanse*—these were two new thoughts that came together out of that verse. First, that God could be taken hold of for *cleansing* as truly as for forgiveness, and, second, that *His faithfulness and justice* could be taken hold of for both, not merely His mercy. When He had given His word of promise, it would be unfaithful and unjust if He were to refuse to fulfil it. Tread reverently, for this is holy ground, but enter boldly, for it is the place of power. It is standing on this holy ground that Amen can be said as explained in our own shorter catechism. "And in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say Amen." It was a new idea of prayer. It was a new vista of possibilities in the Christian life. It was another glimpse of

"the secret of the Lord"—of the lawfulness and power of taking a covenant hold upon him.

A few years later the covenant itself, in its magnificent crowning promise, was made the text of another lesson.

Being, as usual, in a weary wrestle after a Christian life that was worthy of the name, I came upon Heb. 8, 10, "*I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their heart, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*" In a moment I saw the glorious fact that God has undertaken to do the whole work himself, and that He really means what He has said. The next moment my heart went up to Him in the response, "Do it Lord, do it in me; do as thou hast said." It was the covenant prayer, and it got the covenant answer. For some weeks there seemed to be no limit to the spiritual supplies that kept pouring out of that verse. I had fallen unawares upon the veritable "pearl of great price," "the secret of the Lord," "the mystery that hath been hid from ages and from generations." But as yet there was no intelligent apprehension of what had been

received. It slipped through my careless fingers, and I was back to my old poverty again.

It was not until the last few years that the new covenant, as a well-defined reality, has become an actual intellectual possession.

The manner of its "shewing" was this. It became a part of my duty to teach a Missionary Bible Class. The difficulty that has often arisen on the foreign field concerning the subject of infant baptism, led to a study of the beautifully solid Scriptural basis on which that doctrine rests. I knew that spiritually it was a rich line, for I had wrought some of its mines in connection with the baptism of my own children; but I had no idea at the beginning what were the riches to be disclosed during the course.

The Shorter Catechism had already given the key to the situation in its definition,—“Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and *partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace*, and our engagement to be the Lord’s.” God’s covenant dealings



with His people lay at the very heart of the doctrine of baptism. So, in order to master that subject, we began to study the covenants. Some of the results of these studies will be found in the following pages.

# THE NEW COVENANT A LOST SECRET

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## CHAPTER I.

### *THE NEW COVENANT A FORGOTTEN SECRET.*

“THE Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed . . . took the cup, when he had supped, saying, ‘This cup is the New Testament in my blood; drink ye all of it.’”

So there is a New Covenant, which is also a New Testament, the bequest of our dying Redeemer, purchased for us at the price of His blood, and surely worth a good deal.

What is it, and what is the use of it? Ask ten ordinarily intelligent Christians what are the terms of the New Covenant. Will any one interested make the experiment? If his experience is at all like mine, nine out of the ten will

answer pretty much in the words of the Ephesians, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any new covenant."

The Church was not always ignorant on this subject. Young Enzinas, the Spanish reformer, wanted to call his translation of the New Testament by the name of the "New Covenant of our Redeemer," because, as he said, he had noticed that the word Testament was not well understood. "One day, before he had sent the copy to the printer, an old Dominican monk presented himself at his door. He took up the first page, which lay on the table in manuscript and contained the title and an epistle to the Emperor. '*Covenant*,' said the monk. 'The word *Covenant* grates upon my ears ; it is a completely Lutheran phrase.' 'No, it is not a phrase of Luther's,' said Enzinas, 'but of the prophets and apostles.' 'This is intolerable,' resumed the monk ; 'a youth born yesterday or the day before claims to teach the oldest and wisest men what they have taught all their life long. I swear by my sacred cowl that your design is to administer to men's souls the poisonous beverages of Luther, craftily mix-

ing them with the most holy words of the New Testament.' ”\*

Rutherford fed upon the Covenant and knew how to plead it. “If my fire and the Devil’s water make crackling like thunder in the air, I am the less feared; for where there is fire it is *Christ’s part, which I lay and bind upon Him*, to keep in the coal.”† This is covenant grip, with no uncertainty in it. It reminds one of the strong man rejoicing to run the race.

There was a time when there was a “Covenant Theology,” and “there were giants in the earth in those days.” Small wonder; they were fed with the strongest food, they were “fed with the heritage of Jacob their father,” and there is no other food like that.

The words Covenant and Testament were the precious property of the ordinary Christian in the earlier days, as the following story illustrates.

Claverhouse was abroad. There was to be a

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\* D’Aubigné’s History of the Reformation. II. Series. Vol. VIII., p. 63.

† Rutherford’s Letters, p. 322.



communion among the hills, and news of it had got to the dragoons, but exactly where it was to be held could not be ascertained. The soldiers were scouring the country early that Sabbath morning seeking for traces of its whereabouts. They met a peasant servant maid running bare-foot over the heath. "Where are you going, my lass?" sung out the captain of the band. The girl stopped. "She could not tell a lie." To tell the plain truth meant—she knew too well what. Her knowledge of the "secret of the Lord" gave her a ready answer. "My brother has died, sir," she said, "and I am going to hear his will read, and to get my share." Her story and her appearance pleased the captain. "Well, well, lass," he answered, "you will run better with a pair of shoes on your feet," and, opening his purse, he handed her half a crown. Where now will you find a young communicant giving such an account of a communion service, or of his object in going to it?

Toplady had learned this "secret of the Lord." Rock of Ages is instinct with the thought of it. In his beautiful hymn for a sick-bed, "When

languor and disease invade," he sings it out in unmistakable English.

"Sweet in His faithfulness to rest,  
Whose love can never end ;  
Sweet on His covenant of grace  
For all things to depend."

The Covenant and its significance are part of the creed of the Church still. It is not a repudiated secret; it is only a forgotten one. The secret of the Lord has dropped out of the modern Church, and so the power of the Lord has almost disappeared too. Thus it is that we have huge organizations, and expensive machinery, and small results. Is this any wonder when the New Covenant, or the dearly-bought terms on which God's omnipotence has now undertaken to work through man's insignificance, has been lost? So, having lost sight of the terms of the great partnership, the insignificance is left to work out results like itself, not like the omnipotence with which it still supposes itself linked.

## CHAPTER II.

### *HOW HAS THE CHURCH LOST THIS SECRET?*

A VERY serious explanation of this loss has lately become clear. The knowledge of this secret is not ensured by merely having it stated in the Church standards. If that would have kept it, Presbyterians could not have lost it. It evidently depends directly upon the "shewing" of God Himself. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and *He* will shew them His covenant." In Isa. 58: 13, 14, we are distinctly told who it is that is to receive this special "shewing"—this "feeding with the heritage of Jacob our father." It is undeniably true that the birthright Jacob craved and the blessing he secured meant neither more nor less than this—the covenant of God with Abraham to be his own heritage for ever. To be fed with the

heritage of Jacob is to have God so "shew" us His covenant that we shall enter into the joy and power of it as our own inheritance.

In the light of that thought let us read the passage and see how it is and why it is that the Church has lost the knowledge of the covenant. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; *then* shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and *feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy Father*; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; he that hath ears let him hear it.

Take notice, it is only to him who so honors His Sabbath that He undertakes to shew His covenant. Perhaps it is only to him who so honors the Sabbath that God *can* shew it.

Is it possible for a lover to let out to his bride-elect the deeper secrets of his love for her,



while she, during his own appointed trysting times, is dallying with other admirers? And is it possible for God to shew His richest secret of love to one who is spending the hours of His Holy Day "doing his own ways and finding his own pleasure, and speaking his own words"? Because His people have ceased to keep God's Sabbath as a tryst, He has had to cease shewing them the secret of His covenant.

If there is any one reading this page who knows in his own heart that he does not spend the Sabbath sitting at Christ's feet watching for His secret teaching, then my poor friend, you had better shut the book at once, for I do not think you will get anything out of it.

## CHAPTER III.

### *GOD'S PURPOSE IN GIVING A COVENANT— TO MAKE FAITH TRIUMPHANT.*

ANDREW MURRAY has said, "The covenant is God's cure for unbelief."

There is neither honor nor profit to the Lord in the unbelief that answers every large promise given, in the words of Joram's nobleman, "If the Lord would open windows in heaven might such a thing be." He has Himself planned an actual cure for unbelief—the giving His people covenant hold upon Him for the fulfilment of His promises, that, by "two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie," the heirs of promise might have "strong consolation."

That this is exactly His purpose in giving a covenant is beautifully plain in following the story of Gen. 15.

God spoke, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

Abram's answer reveals the yearning after an unfulfilled promise. "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and one born in my house is mine heir?"

"And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, This shall not be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them, and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness."

He considered not the difficulties; these were God's. He staggered not at the promise; that was his, and the full glory of it. "He was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform."

Here was faith that gave glory to God, and required no covenant solemnity to establish it. God's promise had been given, and that was enough. One of the immutable things was held sufficient security this time.

One promise had been received. God was ready with another. His next word was, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, *to give thee this land to inherit it.*"

Abram was not merely to have a family; that family was to have an inheritance; and the good land before his eyes was to be that inheritance.

God had said it, but Abram could not take it in. His answer is running over with unbelief. "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

How did he know that he was to have a family? God had said it. How could he know that that family should yet have strength to displace the present inhabitants and inherit that good land as their own? God had said it. Was not that enough? But here we find Abram, the father of the believing, doing exactly what believing people have been guilty of ever since. We find him discriminating among God's promises. One he will believe, for it is credible, but another he cannot believe, for it is incredible.



He can believe that he shall have a family. God can give life if He will. But he cannot believe that that unborn family shall yet have prowess enough to conquer the present mighty inhabitants of the land. He sees far greater difficulties in the way of God's working wonders through his children than when He simply undertakes to work a wonder through His own direct energy. And unbelief answers, not faith, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

God does not find fault with Abram. He does not reason with him. But He goes to work at once to make a covenant with him, that by two immutable things, the promise and the covenant, the word and the oath, Abram's faith may be made to triumph over unbelief once and forever. Thank God, when He did it, His heart was upon us as well as upon Abraham, for "God, willing to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that . . . we might have strong consolation."

God did not find fault with Abram, but He said to him, "Take me an heifer of three years

old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon."

How did Abram feel as he went to do God's bidding? *He* knew what God meant. He had doubted His word, and now the living God was going to give His oath.

He took all these creatures and divided them in the midst, and laid them in proper form, with a path between the pieces, according to the custom of the times when a solemn oath was to be sworn.

He waited and watched till the sun went down, and then a horror of great darkness fell upon him, and he saw a smoking furnace and a burning lamp pass up and down between those pieces. Seeing God could swear by no greater, He swear by Himself saying, "Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee, and unto thy seed have I given this land to inherit it, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

Why did the Lord so turn His promise into a solemn covenant? He did it that Abram's faith might become a triumphant faith—that it should

never stagger any more. And there was, besides, a wider purpose in the great heart of the living God. He did it that the heirs of promise through all time might have the strong consolation of Abram, and see every promise a covenant, and every covenant secured by the solemn oath of Jehovah, that, by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, faith might become triumphant, and unbelief an ever-increasing impossibility as the knowledge of God grows.

What is God's purpose in giving the new covenant? Is it not to make faith specially triumphant concerning these three special promises of this very special document? Even if Christians, in spite of Heb. 6, should fail to apprehend the covenant force that inheres in every promise, shining from every corner of the Word of God, peculiar pains must be taken that the covenant force of the three peculiar promises constituting the new terms of the new partnership, must not be lost sight of,

“What more could he say than to us he hath said,”  
that our faith may be triumphant indeed.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *WHAT IS THIS FORGOTTEN COVENANT?*

It is first a Testament or will. It is a Testament, because it is the bequest of our dying Redeemer to His people. But the thing He bequeathed to us was a new covenant of partnership between us and God.

“The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, . . . took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood. Drink ye all of it.”

He had not spoken to them of His will before, for He was with them. But now, as He had them gathered round Him for that last feast of fellowship, He put the symbol of His dying bequest to their lips, and said, “Drink ye all of it.”

He was not afraid that the provision He thus

made would prove inadequate, for He added, "Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The scene suggests a dying father whispering to his children, "I leave you amply provided for, do not be anxious."

Christ made a will before He went away. That is plain.

He considered that will such ample provision for His people that He told them they were to have nothing to do with fear or trouble of heart, but that peace, His peace, was to be their continual portion, in the midst of the tribulation and tasks He bequeathed to them as well as the inheritance.

What is this inheritance, the thought of which enabled our Redeemer to leave His disciples with the parting admonition, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The inheritance Christ left to us was a new covenant of partnership with God. It was a document ordered in all things and sure, drawn out by God Himself hundreds of years before,



signed by His name, attested by His oath. This document set forth a covenant of partnership between God and His people constituting completely new terms, made out in three promises.

But this document, though made out for so many centuries, was a Testament. It was a will. It had been a dead letter all those years, for "a Testament is of no strength at all while the Testator liveth." Now Jesus Christ knew that the Testator was just going forth to meet the death which would turn that hitherto inoperative letter into a living covenant. Now He handed it to His people in symbol when He passed them the cup, saying, "Drink ye all of it. My dying bequest to you is a new covenant of partnership with God. Take hold of it, every one of you. Thus only you will show the Lord's death, not merely the pain of it, nor the love of it, but the glory of it and the power of it, till He come."

This cup is the crowning glory of the Lord's Supper, as what it symbolizes is the crowning glory of Christ's salvation. The cup symbolizes the blood. Yes, and the remission which

it has wrought. But it stands for unspeakably more than that, even the new covenant of actual cleansing, inshining of the knowledge of God, and infilling with the Spirit of Christ. Not only remission, but victory.

Our Lord has willed to us a new covenant of partnership with God, and its terms are so unspeakably generous, that those who have fallen heir to it are described as being "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." In the following chapters we shall take up the three covenant promises which constitute the new terms to which each disciple of Jesus Christ has become entitled through the death of the Testator. We shall be like the peasant girl in Scotland. Our Elder Brother has died, and we are going to study His will, and see what is our share.

## CHAPTER V.

### *TERMS OF THE COVENANT OF PARTNERSHIP.—(a) CLEANSING.*

THE New Covenant which Jesus Christ handed to His disciples in His last will and testament is not a hidden thing. It is all written out in intelligible human words in Jer. 31 : 33, 34. It is also quoted in Heb. 8 : 10, 11, as that of which our Lord is now appointed Mediator or Administrator. It is made up of three terms, plainly worded and most explicit in meaning.

These three terms are also given in Ezek. 36 : 25-27. Here they are arranged in the reverse order, but they are the same terms. It is well to study them as they are expressed in both places.

1st. "I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts; and I will be to

them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” (Hebrews.)

“I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.” (Ezekiel.)

This, though given first in Hebrews and Jeremiah, is given last in Ezekiel. This is the crowning promise of the covenant. This is power—power to do God’s will as it is done in heaven.

2nd. “They shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” (Hebrews.)

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you an heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel.)

This is the central or efficient promise in both forms of the covenant. The effectual teaching of the knowledge of God by God Himself—this is life. This is that which shall ever prove the only and the adequate power to turn hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. “We love Him because He first loved us.”

3rd. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews.)

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." (Ezekiel.)

This, though given last in Hebrews, is evidently the initial promise of the Covenant. This is cleansing. This double promise unmistakably undertakes for an actual and an adequate dealing with the hitherto unconquerable difficulty—sin.

Actual cleansing, effectual life, and infinite because Divine power—these are the terms of this covenant of partnership with God to which we, as believers in Jesus Christ, have fallen heir.

About ten years ago, toward the close of a Christian Endeavor meeting, a young man rose, and, in a very few words, drew attention to the statement, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." He explained that the fellowship here spoken of is



not merely that of friendship—that it is the fellowship of *partnership*. We who are members of Christ's body are actually taken into the position of partners with God. Our work in this world is henceforth to be about our Partner's business, and, in doing so, we have a partner's right to draw upon the resources of the Trinity itself in all their fulness as they are treasured up in Christ toward the work of God in the world.

The name and even the countenance of the young speaker have faded out of memory, but I have many a time been glad of the word he then gave.

Partnership? Yes; there is a covenant of partnership between those in whom, that is in whose flesh, "dwelleth no good thing," and Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and can not look on iniquity." Well might the question be asked, "What concord, what partnership, hath Christ with Belial?" Unless this covenant makes adequate provision for the actual cleansing and conquering of sin, it would carry a lie—a moral and philosophical lie—on the face of it.

Thank God, the initial promise makes full and reiterated provision for this.

“ I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” That the mercy covenanted is to be adequate to deal successfully with this intricate question of iniquity is made plain in the second clause of the promise. It is to be mercy so full and efficacious that God undertakes to blot the whole matter from His memory. For God to forget sin in one of His people while it is still only partially under control, is like a physician forgetting an ailment while his remedies have only half-done their work ; or for a fire brigade captain to forget the fire because it has been subdued into glowing coals instead of flames ; or because it has been conquered in one room, while it is still raging in the rest of the house.

That it is adequate, victorious mercy—mercy with the Divine quality in it—is put past doubt in the wording of the same promise in Ezekiel, “ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and *ye shall be clean*: from *all your filthiness* and from *all your idols* will I cleanse you.”

There can be no partnership between sin and God. "If we say we have partnership with Him and walk in darkness, we lie."

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have partnership, and the blood cleanseth—cleanseth from all sin—is a continual, ever-fresh cleansing from all sin. This is not sinless perfection, for it is only sin in us that requires this ever-fresh cleansing. But it is, or ought to be, continual victory.

That this cleansing is not something we can do for ourselves, but that it is a covenant right that can be claimed as the foundation term of the partnership into which we have been taken, appears unmistakably in the ninth verse of 1 John 1. "If we confess our sins, he is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse us from all* unrighteousness."

Cleansing is a necessity if there is to be the fellowship of partnership between us and God—cleansing such that it can be said of us, we "walk in the light as he is in the light." There is something real and radical about this cleansing. It is not the approximate and comparative

cleansing that looks pretty well as we merely compare ourselves amongst ourselves. It is cleansing that will stand God's inspection.

Which of us has not been wearied out with the fruitless efforts to obtain such a cleansing? Here is the secret of continual failure. We have been trying to do for ourselves (with a little help here and there from God) what He has emphatically announced to be *His* peculiar work, what he has, moreover, given us in Christ a covenant right to claim from Him. We can come before Him and plead, "In thy faithfulness and in thy righteousness, cleanse me from this sin." We can rise from our knees and sing, "As sure as He is faithful, and as sure as He is just, He will cleanse me. He has given me in Christ a covenant right to this cleansing. For Him to fail to respond to this plea would be a breach of covenant."

This is the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free: "Whosoever committeth sin, the same is the servant of sin." But, "if the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

This is the Gospel of *utter helplessness*. O

what a rest it is, linked with the glorious Gospel of a covenant right in Christ Jesus—a right not to ask merely, but to *claim*, cleansing from *all unrighteousness*—to ask it not as a mercy, but as, in Christ, our right, *His* right. Humbly, but very boldly, let us take this position. Humbly, because of our own utter unworthiness, but very boldly, because of our actual title, which is nothing short of the blood and righteousness of Him who has taken our place before God and *given us His*. Thus we have the key that unlocks the unsearchable riches of Christ, just as the properly signed cheque unlocks the treasures of a bank.

What can be done to help inexperienced fingers to use this key? Take one special sin, self-conceit, for instance. Who that has detected this contemptible sin in his own heart but has despised himself for it. He has striven, but, surely I speak wittingly, he has striven vainly to overcome it. If seen quickly enough, he can check the conceited word. He can even require himself to say humble words. He can firmly pass the praise on to somebody else that



he knows from the bottom of his heart he wants for himself. He can turn his eye upon his own faults till he knows with the certainty of a demonstration that he has nothing whatever to be proud of. But there, untouched by all these laudable efforts—there as real and living as ever, lies that thirst for the approbation of others, which was the very sin that brought the curse of Heaven upon the orator Herod. He despises himself for the sin that seems the most despicable and unreasonable of the whole long list of sins. But there it is still, a part of his very being.

What is the covenant method of fighting this sin? Whenever conscious of its existence, simply tell God about it. Confess the sin to Him, and then tell him it is now *His* work, *not yours*, to cleanse you from that unrighteousness as well as to forgive it. You can then leave the matter in His hands, or, if necessary, hold Him to it, that it is in His hands according to contract. He is faithful and just to do what He has covenanted to do. He will not break covenant while the rainbow halo encircles His throne.

You are on sure ground here. It is His work to cleanse, and you can *trust* Him to do it, and to do it gloriously.

This you will clearly perceive is not merely a prayer for mercy which may or may not be answered. It is a covenant prayer, which effectually takes hold upon God for whatever mercy and power may be needed adequately to deal with that sin, and it takes hold upon God's *faithfulness* and *justice* for a complete answer. It was glorious mercy that gave such a covenant. But now it is given it is *faithfulness* that fulfils it. It would be wonderful mercy for our King to present a condemned criminal with a full pardon and a cheque for a thousand pounds. But once he has done so, it is faithfulness, *not* mercy, that is called into exercise when the cheque is presented. God is well pleased when His people, bold in Christ, take this strong ground before Him, and tell Him in all seriousness, as Jacob did, "I will not let thee go except Thou do it for me." So we become "princes," prevailing with God and man.

A word further upon God's method of dealing

with the sin spoken of. I think I see His method. He does not proceed to humiliate you. That would hurt and reveal the trouble, as stepping on a corn emphasizes its presence. But it has no curative power. His wonderful and most philosophical method is to let in upon your soul a further knowledge of His own love and His own glory. He humbles you by lifting you up closer to Himself. As you see His face and the unsearchable riches which are yours in Christ, self-conceit wilts. It is not the knowledge of your own littleness and sin that takes the pride out of you. It is the apprehension of God's everlasting and overwhelming grace to you in Christ that goes to the very root of pride. He knows how to do the thing He has covenanted to do.

Why, then, do unbelief, and selfishness, and worldliness, and pride defile and cripple the people who hold such a covenant? Is it not because the Church has forgotten that she holds such a covenant? She does not know it. She does not claim it, and she does not enjoy it. Individuals here and there have learned this secret, but the Church has lost it.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *TERMS OF THE COVENANT OF PARTNERSHIP.*

#### *—(b) TEACHING, OR LIFE.*

“THEY shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” (Heb.)

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” (Ezek.)

These two promises are one and the same. They are the central or efficient promise of this new covenant of partnership with God.

These two promises are one and the same. The one in Hebrews reveals the adequate power to be employed. The one in Ezekiel announces the radical results that are to follow.

The only possible method of introducing life into dead hearts is to communicate what at the fall we lost, the true knowledge of the living God. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God."

From the earliest days men have wearied themselves to communicate this knowledge to their neighbors and their brothers. God now announces that in the glad Messiah days His covenant people shall cease from attempting that work which, in merely human hands, can never be anything but failure.\* Yet the work shall be done. The knowledge of God shall be so taught that God Himself shall look upon His people and shall say of them, They know Me.

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\* An objection may be raised by some, Are we, then, not to try to teach the ignorant? Christ has said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.*" The commission to teach is as wide as the world. But His disciples were also told not to begin to teach until the Divine Power to teach should come upon them. Before that the Apostles themselves were utterly unable to do the work. After that, it was not they who taught, it was the Spirit of Christ who was in them. Then their words were effectual teaching; they were in demonstration of the



He sweeps away all human teachers, and yet He says they shall be taught. This can mean nothing else but that *He* undertakes to be the teacher. He undertakes so to manifest Himself to them that all shall know Him from the least to the greatest.

This is the covenant, but what are the facts? The people who do know their God shall do exploits. How many of God's people are doing exploits in His name? How many of them are more than conquerors through Him who loves them? These are they who *do* know their God. Those who are continually mourning defeat have only learned to know God with the blear-eyed knowledge of him who saw "men as trees walk-

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Spirit and of power. In the work of teaching others the knowledge of God, Christ and the believer go out yoked together. Utter impotence is joined with "all power in heaven and in earth." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." When the bride, apart from the Spirit, tries to do so, nobody listens. We have, apart from the Spirit of God, absolutely no power in that direction.

When a call comes to teach, let us not answer, "I will try. Help me, Lord." But let us look up in His face and say, "Lord, teach *Thou* by me and they shall know *Thee*."

ing." A partial knowledge leads only to partial victory, and partial victory is really defeat. The knowledge that God covenants to give is a whole, rounded-out knowledge—"The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

This is the covenant, but what are the facts? There are real believers who know so little of the love of God that they are continually afraid that He will do them harm—so little of His truth that they cannot get rid of the idea that His promises are larger than His purposes—so little of His faithfulness that they have no assurance that He can be relied on to keep His promises at all—so little of His wisdom, His prudence, that they are constantly afraid He is making blunders in His management of themselves—so little of His holiness that sin seems—O the pity and shame of it!—that sin seems a rather small thing. Is that the kind of knowledge of Himself that God has covenanted to give to His people, from the least to the greatest?

That is old covenant knowledge of God.

That is wilderness knowledge of God, quite compatible with endless murmurings and failure. God would not own that as His new covenant work.

If, then, He has covenanted to do the teaching Himself, and to give such knowledge that He shall look well pleased upon His people and say : They know Me, how comes it that they do *not* know Him ? Is it not because the Church has forgotten that she holds such a covenant promise ? She does not know it, she does not claim it, and it lies a dead letter in her hands.

She is a hungry pauper with a cheque for measureless wealth hidden among her rags. But she has either forgotten that it is there, or does not believe that there is any power in it, or does not know how to present it. So she goes about asking alms when she might be drawing her millions.

This is the central, efficient promise. The knowledge of God is life. The Spirit-taught knowledge of God is *the* power that does everything in us and through us. The knowledge of His love conquers fear, and fills with love and

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joy and gratefulness. The knowledge of His truth conquers doubt, and fills with quiet confidence. The knowledge of His unfailing wisdom conquers fretfulness, and leads to spelling disappointment with an *h*—*His* appointment, and so has the marvellous power of turning bitter into sweet. The knowledge of His power conquers discouragement, and puts into our mouth the song, “Jesus Christ my Lord is God the Creator. What have I to do with discouragement?” The knowledge of His holiness conquers sloth, for it illuminates the words, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” The knowledge of God as He is conquers sin, and transforms to the very image of Christ. “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.” “We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.”

One thing has often been a puzzle. The Shorter Catechism says, “The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness,” and I think most Christians believe the statement to be true. How is it that at the moment of death sin loses its hold upon God’s people? Christ

has told us plainly that the seat of sin is the heart, not the body. How is it, then, that the moment of severance from the body is to be the moment of complete severance from sin ?

But the mystery seems clear now. The knowledge of God, even the fullest knowledge we can enjoy here, must be dim. It can be complete, rounded-out, Spirit-given knowledge, but it *must* be dim. It can be ample for the conquering of sin and keeping it under our feet, but there is nothing but the undimmed glory of God that can *destroy* it. But to see the *undimmed* glory of God's character is more than mortal flesh can bear. It is easy to see, on reading Rutherford's letters, that God had to do with him as He did with Moses, "lay his hand over him," lest the glory should be too great for him. That His servants here on earth may be fitted for service, He will show them much of His glory ; but that they may be left on earth for the service needed, that glory *must* be seen "through a glass, darkly," through "windows of agates," as we look at the sun through smoked glasses.



But when our work on earth is done, and this frail body that can stand so little is left for a rest, or changed to match the redeemed spirit, *then* we shall see Him actually *as He is*. At that moment every atom of sin that is in us will wither into nothing. It could not live for one moment then. But the Christ in us, the new, glad, redeemed nature, will leap into His presence to live and develop and serve in the light of His countenance, growing ever nearer, throughout eternity, to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," "that he may be the first-born among many brethren," each so conformed to His image as to be recognized as a brother by the likeness.

Yes, there is power in the knowledge of God. The whole covenant is given in one promise in Jer. 24 : 7 : "I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord ; and they shall be my people and I will be their God." The God-given knowledge of God accomplishes the cleansing of the initial promise, and leads up to the infilling of the culminating promise. The covenant is like Him who gave it ; it is a Trinity—One in Three and Three in One.

How shall we secure this effectual manifestation of God to us? Shall we ask for it? Yes, but far more than ask for it. Let us *claim* it as our covenant-right in Christ. Tread reverently, for this is holy ground; but step boldly, for this is our God-given place of power. Here we can say with Jacob, "I will not let thee go except thou shew me thyself." And God will call us by the name of Israel, for, as a prince, we shall have power with God and with men, and shall prevail.

Once we have learned this secret we shall know something of what God means when He says, "Ye that make mention of the name of the Lord, give him no rest until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth;" and when He says, "Put me in remembrance, let us plead together," and "Concerning the work of my hands, command ye me."

O, it is a bold place He has given us; but it is the place secured by the matchless "blood of the everlasting covenant," and that is enough.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *TERMS OF THIS COVENANT.—(c) INFILLING OR POWER.*

A FEW years ago, Dr. McKay, of Formosa spent a hurried two hours in our home. Before leaving, he kneeled down with us. One petition of that prayer has ever since seemed like an open door into the larger treasures of the kingdom. He asked that the Spirit of God might take possession of us—might *so* take possession of us, that He should fill and animate and control our human spirit *as* our human spirit fills and animates and controls our mortal body.

It was a vast petition; yet it was simply asking what God has covenanted to give in this third, this crowning promise of the new covenant: "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall

keep my judgments and do them." I will put my Spirit within you, and He shall so fill and animate and control your human spirit that you shall work out His will as your mortal body now works out the will of your human spirit. Thus the Lord's Prayer shall be answered, and God's will shall "be done in earth *as it is in heaven.*" Truly we are not straitened in Him; we are straitened in ourselves, because we will not forsake our own thoughts—our miserably small and meagre thoughts—of what God's salvation is.

The form of this crowning promise, given in Hebrews, is just as full and glorious: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

The laws of God are two. First, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all the soul, with all heart, with all thy mind and with all thy strength." The second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." These two laws, by the energy of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, are to be so put into our mind and

written in our hearts that our daily life shall be the living out of them. So He shall *cause* us to walk in His statutes, and we shall keep his judgments and do them. The two forms of this crowning promise are identical in meaning.

But there is a further clause in Hebrews, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

This covenant is a covenant of partnership, and this clause announces that, with this cleansing and teaching and infilling, the partnership shall be a real and operating thing. He shall occupy to them the full relation of *their God*, and they shall occupy to Him the full relation of *His people*. When this is actually the case, He shall have an army, be it small or large, by whom He shall be able to conquer this rebellious world to Himself—it may be in a shorter time than most people think. Then the evangelization of the world in this generation may seem slow progress.

One day, while thinking over this clause of this third covenant promise, I became conscious of wishing to alter the wording of it. Would it



not have been sweeter if it had read—"I will be to them a Father, and they shall be to me my children." But very soon I saw my folly.

I saw that God, in His matchless word, has been at great pains to spell out to us the glory of that expression, "I will be to them a God." He has laid before us many precious things, and put them all together that He might enable us to reach out toward the full glory of that word, "I will be to them a God." Father, though so near and full and sweet, only gives a part of what there is in that one word *God*. We must add to it all that is peculiar to the words brother, lover, friend, physician, advocate, shepherd, prophet, priest, king. That no element of tenderness may be wanting, He has added this to them all, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee." Take the peculiar glory of each of these and put them all together and you will be simply spelling out, according to God's moral phonetics, the incomparable name of  
G O D .

"I will be to them a God"—I will be to them all that these terms taken together can express.

“They shall be to me a people”—they shall be enjoying in me all that these terms can unitedly contain. The great partnership shall be a business reality, and God shall have bands of men and women sanctified and meet for the Master’s use. When this becomes the actual condition of Christ’s Church, then the visions of the 19th of Revelation and of the 110th Psalm shall be transferred from the region of prophecy to that of history, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

This is the culminating promise of the covenant purchased for us by the precious blood of our Redeemer. We have handed to us at every communion the appointed symbol of our covenant right to this promise as well as the other two—that the Spirit of God shall be so put within us, and the laws of God so written in our hearts, that our life shall be the doing of His will on earth *as it is done in heaven.*

If these are our covenant rights in Christ, why are they not universally fulfilled in Christian experience? Is it not because the Church has

forgotten that she has fallen heir to them? She does not know them, she does not claim them, and she does not enjoy them, and so she is still a failure and the world a desert.

She sees the sacramental wine poured out at the communion feast. She hears the words, "This cup is the new testament in my blood; drink ye all of it." She takes the symbol into her hands and puts it to her lips, but forgets that it means a covenant—not merely forgiveness; a covenant of partnership with God—not merely protection from His wrath; that it means cleansing and life and power for victorious service. Because she has forgotten that the wine means a whole covenant, the Church is still a failure and the world is still a desert.

Let her lay hold on this covenant, and faith shall become triumphant and victorious; and she shall be exactly like her faith, triumphant and victorious, too.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT; OR, THE GROUND ON WHICH IT RESTS.*

ANDREW MURRAY says: "When we come before God in prayer, let us expect an answer to be measured out to us *according to the value of the blood of Christ in God's sight.*"

The blood once shed on Calvary and now presented for us continually by our great High Priest, is the only ground on which the prayer of a sinner can be graciously answered. But that is strong and gloriously ample ground, and should lead us out to large petitions and abundant expectations.

A laborer, coming home from his work, saw a child looking longingly into a bake-shop window. Something in her attitude touched the

kingly heart under the worn coat, and he took hold of her hand, saying, "Come in with me, child." Then he opened an old leathern pouch in which his week's scant wages had just been placed, and laid five cents on the counter, with the words, "Give the child what she wants."

It was a princely act, yet the little white coin on the baker's counter did not afford an ample ground for large requests. A cheese-cake pie swept the whole capital, and, after a few delicious mouthfuls, it was all gone.

The blood of Christ shed for our cleansing and enrichment is not going to be so exhausted, It is measureless value that has been laid down to our credit, and we may ask boldly on, right up to its unattainable limit. If we ask from our God according to the value of that blood *in our own sight*, we surely shall get boldness to ask great things. Then if we look up into the face of the Father, and expect an answer to be measured out according to the value of that blood in *His* sight, what may we not expect? Do you not feel faith expanding and stretching up as you think of it?



The value of the blood of Christ is the capital set down to our credit. The New Covenant is the document in which that whole capital is legally made over to us and put within our reach. Covenant prayer is the intelligent and purposeful draft upon these unsearchable riches that are all legally ours in Christ.

Here are two specimens of Paul's petitions. They are worth studying clause by clause to see what we may ask.

"Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." And it is only by such large prayers being asked and answered that the glory of Jesus Christ and His salvation can shine out upon the world.

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory (the blood has bought those riches for us, and the covenant is the legal expression of them), to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

It is by such large prayers being asked and answered through, and according to the "blood of the everlasting covenant," that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall yet, perhaps very soon, cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

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Since writing the above I have come in contact where it should not have been, with that

theory of the love of God and the life of Christ which eliminates the blood as the efficacious factor in God's scheme of salvation.

Oh, the madness of it! the blindness, the utter weakness of it!

When the earth shall be covered with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, then it shall be vocal with praise. But the song shall be the one John sings, "Unto him that loved us, and *washed us from our sins in his own blood*, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Love, and blood, and power—these three—but the blood shall forever be in the very heart of it.

When heaven itself shall open upon our view we shall see, as John did, "in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain." And we shall join with full hearts in the song of the saints, "Thou art worthy, for *thou was slain*, and *hast redeemed us to God by thy blood*, and hast made us kings and priests." Love and blood and power, but the blood shall still be in the very heart of the song. Then we shall hear the chorus to our own anthem taken up by

“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” of the inhabitants of heaven. “*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain* to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor and glory and blessing.” Then a wider chorus still from every creature in God’s wide universe, beginning with the closing note of the heavenly chorus, “Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and *unto the Lamb*” (the propitiatory sacrifice) “for ever and ever.” And the four living creatures will say “Amen.” And the four and twenty elders will fall down and worship. No dissentient voice that day. The Lamb that was slain and His blood (*not* His beautiful life) are the heart of the song. Will it not be well to tune our harps now to this key? or we may find them unfit for service when that day comes.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *JESUS CHRIST, MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, OR THE EXECUTOR OF HIS OWN WILL.*

THE New Covenant is, as we have seen, first a Testament. It is the legacy which our dying Redeemer willed us before He went away. Who is the executor of this last will and testament? Who but the risen Redeemer Himself?

This is the office He has gone to His Father's right hand to fulfil—to be administrator of His own will, mediator of the new and better covenant.

Do we need cleansing? Let us go to Him with the first covenant promise. "Sprinkle clean water upon me, and I shall be clean." All power is given unto Him at His Father's right hand to put us into actual possession of the



contents of this promise. He is a competent mediator of the better covenant.

Is our knowledge of God feeble and partial? and our hearts, in consequence, unbelieving, cold, and selfish? Let us go to Him with the second covenant promise, "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant," "That I may *know thee*," whom to know is life eternal.

"All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth" on purpose that He may be able to communicate this otherwise incommunicable knowledge. *He* is able to teach where neighbor and brother and father and mother and minister and professor have utterly failed. He is able to put us in possession of the contents of His own will. He has not bequeathed to us an imaginary property, or undertaken to administer what He cannot handle.

Does the quickened heart grieve over its helplessness to fulfil God's will or do His work? Does it reach out with a great yearning for service—for power to work out His will on earth as it is done in heaven? Let us go to Him on His mediatorial throne with the third promise.

"*Put* thy spirit within me, and *cause* me to walk in thy statutes." "*Put* thy laws into my mind and write them in my heart." "Do as thou hast said."

"All power is given unto him in heaven and earth" to fulfil the mighty contract. "What he hath promised he is able also to perform." What He hath bequeathed, He is able also to administer.

Our Brother has died, and left us a truly magnificent property, and now lives to put us in possession of it. Is it not time for us, like the Scotch lassie, to study His will and put in a claim for our share?

## CHAPTER X.

### *HOW ANY PROMISE MAY BECOME A SPECIAL COVENANT.*

It is not by accident that God's promises constitute unfailing channels of living water to some, while the very bountifulness of their wording remains a tantalizing aggravation of spiritual poverty in the case of others. The simple fact of appropriating faith makes all the difference. But as in arithmetic, so in grace, the simplicity of a principle will shine out through examples better than through mere explanation.

The Lord said to Abram, "Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them;" and He said unto him, "So shall thy seed be." Abram laid hold upon the promise, and, without the need for any oath,

there was established an everlasting covenant between them.

The Lord sent word to David, saying, "I will build thee an house, and I will establish it forever." David laid hold on the promise. He went and sat down before God, and answered, "And now, O Lord God, do as thou hast said." He took it all in, and his dying song was, "The Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although He make it not to grow." God had given a promise, and he had taken it. There was a covenant at once.

The Lord sent a message to the people of Samaria: "To-morrow, about this time, shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel in the gate of Samaria." The promise was for the nobleman upon whom the king leaned as truly as for all the rest of the people. But he laid no hold on it. He answered the Divine promise: "If the Lord would make windows in heaven might such a thing be?" Unbelief sealed his covenant with death. He entered into no cove-

nant with God. Had he answered as David did, "Lord, do as thou hast said," he would at once have had covenant hold upon God to the whole extent of the promise.

So any promise God has given may be transformed into a peculiar covenant between Him and any individual soul.

A little girl was seeking salvation in Christ. The word was brought before her, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." That was good news to her. She simply believed it, and answered, "This word is Christ's, and I may trust it. He has not cast me out. He will not cast me out. He will in no wise cast me out. I am *His forever*." Christ gave His word, and she believed it. So an everlasting covenant was formed between them, even the sure mercies of David, secured in exactly the same way.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." These were the words that fell on the ears of a sin-burdened student.

"Look!" answered the sinner, "He does not say, '*See!*' I can look to Him, and I have His

word for the rest." Such, in brief, was the initial covenant sealed between young Spurgeon and His God. He hearkened to the Lord. He took at His invitation the word that was sweet to his taste. He let his soul delight itself in its fatness, and an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David, was established forever between them.

The fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah explains how any soul, even one who is spending his money and his life in a mad race after the world, may turn round and at once secure this highest privilege of direct covenant relation with God.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth!" The call is first to the thirsty.

The second call is to the worldly, "spending money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not."

Those two classes are alike called to Christ's feast—those who are anxiously thirsting for the living water, and those who, not knowing what ails them, are spending themselves trying to draw water out of empty cisterns.

What is the feast to which our Lord is here



inviting? It is nothing less than a banquet of His own words: "Wherefore do ye spend your labor for that which satisfieth not? *Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good.*"

What a ray of heavenly light flashed into the life of the writer when the force of this call was first made apparent! "Hearken unto me. My words and promises are the better feast to which I call you. Eat ye that which is good. I bid you the host's welcome to the sweetest and best of them. Pick and choose. They are all spread out for you. Take what you like the best. My son, eat thou honey because it is good, and the honeycomb which is sweet to thy taste. Do not say any of it is too good. Let your soul delight itself in fatness. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

The figure is one familiar to us all. A cordial host at the head of his own table talking to little children that he wants to make happy. "What shall I pass you? What would you like? Take some of this. Do not be afraid."

And the more we took, the more was our entertainer pleased.

So our Lord lovingly presses us to appropriate His promises. He cannot be done with it. "Incline your ear and come unto me. Hear, and your soul shall live." Hearken, and take; listen, and live.

"What shall be the outcome to me, Lord, if I accept thine invitation, and help myself to a promise from thy spread table?"

"It shall happen unto thee with thine appropriated promise as it happened unto David with his appropriated promise. The result of it shall be that there shall be an everlasting covenant between us, even the sure mercies of David. The promise you have taken is yours; the fulfilling, it is mine. It shall be a covenant between us. Rest in your covenant right up to the whole value of the promise."

In this way may any promise in the Word of God become an actual, individual covenant between the soul and the Promiser, by simple appropriating faith on the strength of an unequivocal invitation.

It is wonderful to see the beautiful and immediate results that flow from the acting out of this very simple principle; the immediate results being a joy and confidence that the world does not understand, and the more remote depending upon the extent of the promise grasped.

Deep trouble visited a Christian household; there seemed to be no help and no hope.

This promise was lying on Christ's table of dainties, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." They took it unitedly; they called upon God in the day of their trouble, and took His promise as their own. From that time there has been an everlasting covenant established between them, that He shall deliver them, and so deliver them that they shall be abundantly satisfied, and shall from the heart glorify Him in the matter. It shall not be a half-deliverance, but one like God Himself. That is the substance of the promise, and they hold it as a cheque upon God's omnipotent faithfulness. If the outcome of the whole thing is to be praise, is it not well to begin the thanksgiving at once? God's cove-

nant is as sure as the fact, and it is sweet to begin the thanksgiving before the fulfilment comes.

The effect of this covenant hold upon the attitude of the believer is well illustrated in the story of the old Scotchwoman.

She was dying, and she knew it, but she had no fear. Her unruffled confidence puzzled the young minister who was waiting upon her. In short, he scarcely thought it quite consistent with proper humility.

"Nannie," he said to her one day, "are ye no too sure? What if ye should be lost after a'?"

"Hech, mon," replied the dying woman, "that wad be a sair thing. But," she added, clasping her hands, and lifting her dim eyes to heaven, "the Lord wad be the greater loser o' the twa o' us. Nannie wad lose her soul, and that wad be a sair loss; but *He* wad lose His honor, an' *that's* no to be thocht upon."

A perplexed Christian laid hold upon the word, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Still light did not come. But decision must be reached. Delay

was impossible. In these circumstances he took hold of another "word of wisdom which was sweet to his taste"—that is, suited to his need, "I will cause thee to hear a voice behind thee saying unto thee, 'This is the way, walk ye in it,' when ye turn to the right hand or when ye turn to the left."

"That will do," he said, "I shall go ahead according to my own best judgment, and I have His word for it that, if I am going wrong, He will pull me back."

He took God at His word, and immediately there was an everlasting covenant formed between them, and he knew it. He could go boldly on now, even in the dark.

In this way, on no authority but Christ's invitation, any of God's promises can be taken and "eaten," and so made our very own. That moment an everlasting covenant is formed between the believer and the Promiser to the full extent of the promise believed. In this way the blessed covenant hold is often intelligently taken and enjoyed by those who know little of the breadth, and length, and depth and height

of the complete covenant of grace. These minor promises are all "Yea and Amen" in Christ, for they are all included in the New Testament made over to us by our Redeemer at His death. They are irrigating channels carrying precious streams out of the new covenant fulness to many a corner of our little life plots, and to many an otherwise barren place in the wilderness round about.

But before the whole world shall be brought to own the sway of our Redeemer, "the temple of God shall be opened in heaven, and the *ark of His Testament*" (the new covenant and its fulness) shall be seen by the people of God. Then there shall be "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." (Rev. 11. 19.)

Then there shall be results, "Then the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." (Rev. 11. 15.)

Then "nothing shall be impossible," because God's people shall again learn "the forgotten secret of world-wide, prevailing prayer."



## CHAPTER XI.

### *A STUDY OF JACOB; OR, THE COVENANT IN INTERCESSION.*

ABRAHAM received a covenant with God, and he rested on it. Jacob obtained the same covenant and he not only rested on it: he wrestled on it. Therefore he received a new name, because, as a prince, he had power with God and men, and prevailed.

It is a great thing to rest on God's covenant. It is a greater thing to study the breadth and length and depth and height of it, to lay hold on the Giver of it, to wrestle for its contents, and to prevail.

That this may shine out, let us study Jacob in his attitude towards the covenant inheritance of the Abrahamic family.

“I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob

thy father"—the heritage he craved, the heritage he got, the heritage he utilized.

The heritage Jacob craved was, a covenant interest in the God of Abraham.

Every swallow on the wing has a sweet interest in the love and care of the great Creator. Jacob wanted more than that.

Every descendant of Noah, as he "considers the heavens, the work of God's fingers," has or ought to have a deep and intelligent interest in Him whose handiwork they are. Jacob wanted more than that.

All the descendants of Abraham had a family interest in the God of their father. Jacob wanted more than that.

He had set his heart on an individual interest in the covenant of God with Abraham, the interest Abraham himself had, the sort of interest that would justify him saying, *I know* that in me, and in my seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

With what singleness of heart he set his affections upon this covenant relation with God!

The buying of the birthright is far more

decidedly an exhibition of enthusiastic Godwardness than of contemptible selfishness, as it is so often unnecessarily described. Esau knew as well as he the eternal significance of the thing he was asked to sell. He also knew the value of the red pottage quite as well as he who offered it. But Esau said, "My life on earth is short: what benefit shall these far-away promises be to me?"\* He set light by the covenant heritage God had given into the family of his father, while that covenant heritage was the one thing the younger brother yearned for. Would it be selfish to buy for a sixpence an alabaster box of ointment, very precious, whereof the owner was making a football? Just as unnecessary is it to characterize as selfish Jacob's offer for the birthright.

The birthright was lawfully bought, and certainly with it the inheritance that belonged to it. That was settled. But Isaac still proposed to pass the family *blessing* on to Esau. Now Jacob knew, and so did his mother, that

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\* "Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" (Gen. 25. 32.)

that blessing lawfully belonged to him. In seeking to secure it they were seeking only what was right. Their failure was, yielding to the miserable unbelief that whispered, "God is going to allow the blessing to go to the wrong brother." He who sitteth upon the circle of the earth did not need their lie to help Him to keep things right. But let him that is without sin amongst us first cast a stone at Jacob for this. Was it not the same unbelief that led Sarah to give Hagar to her husband, that she might thereby help God to keep His promise of a son? She might have known that the Most High required no such questionable assistance as she was rendering to enable Him to keep His word. But this is a woefully common form of unbelief in our own day. How many a father has worked and worried himself into an early grave lest God might otherwise fail to keep His promises about food and raiment. He has broken the sixth commandment because he feared God Himself would break the ninth. Every form of doing a little wrong to secure a great right is simply Jacob and Rebekah over

again. Jacob was surely wrong, both in the unbelief and in the deception; but it would be well for us to look carefully around at home before we cast a stone at him for that.

And have we glowing in our souls, as Jacob had, that jewel which is in God's sight of great price, a burning desire for personal covenant relations with Him who "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span?" Jacob's sin looks small beside the heavenly radiance of his one ambition. Truly, one thing is needful, and Jacob chose that good thing which shall never be taken away from him.

Jacob yearned for this inheritance of covenant promise, and he got it. If I were a painter—a *great* painter—I would like to draw him as he stretched himself down on his stony bed in the wilderness, that night after receiving his heart's desire. Broken consciousness of his sin would be in his countenance, for the Spirit of God was in him, and God had marked that unbelief and that lie, and did not leave him untaught on either score. Tender sorrow at parting from a

home, where his whole intense heart had been centred—that would be there. But deeper than either of these, glorifying every softened lineament, must have shined the joy of fulfilled hope, the gladness of that faith which is the having of things hoped for, the seeing of things not seen. Where is the artist who could work all this into one human face lying in the dim starlight, looking up into the heavens ?

But God saw it, and He answered it with a vision, that was the glory of his covenant heritage, in one illuminated picture. In that Heaven-sent vision we can read the thoughts and searchings that had filled the heart of the wanderer that night before God gave to His beloved sleep. Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "As for thee, O King, thy thoughts come unto thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter ; and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass." If Nebuchadnezzar's dream was given in answer to his kingly searchings before he went to sleep, after the developments to come in the world's history, what must have been the mid-



night meditations of this lonely fugitive, reaching out after the secrets of the covenant heritage that was now his own, that led to the rearing of that heavenly ladder between him and God, claimed in later days by Jesus Christ as a picture of Himself. (John 1, 5-1.)

Jacob had yearned after that heritage of promise; he had obtained it. What use did he make of it?

This is the most important part of the story of Jacob. There are many who know something of the overflowing joy of first possession who never develop purpose or intelligence in utilizing what they have received.

Esau was coming against him with four hundred armed men, to sweep him and his family from off the face of the earth. He knew his brother. "I fear him," he said, "lest he come and smite me; and the mother with the children." He knew that, apart from omnipotent intervention, his hopes, which had been so high, were all to be blotted out in blood at once.

What could he do ?

First of all, he went to God in prayer. He had learned how to pray, and consequently he believed in it as an actual means of defence.

What arguments did he use with the Lord ? Jacob believed in arguments in prayer, for he really meant to secure an answer.

He did not plead his own righteousness. That was out of sight. On the contrary, he owned that he was "not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth" that God had already showed to him. But Jacob had one argument, and a double one. He began his prayer by reminding the Lord of the command and promise that had started him out on the journey. "Return unto thy country, and I will deal well with thee." Jacob had a strong grip upon everlasting faithfulness here, and he knew it. The expedition, started in response to God's own word of command and promise, could not end disastrously without a blot upon the honor of Him who had spoken them. He closed by reminding the Lord of the Abrahamic promise, which was his by purchased birthright, his by

his father's blessing, and his by the ample reiteration of the One who stood at the top of the ladder while he lay at its foot. "And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." How could these children now in peril fall under the sword of Esau without a breach of this sacred covenant of the Lord? Jacob was on the strongest ground conceivable here, and he seems to have felt it. For his prayer was not prolonged. He had said what he meant. He had strengthened his case by arguments which *could not* be set aside. Then he went to work.

He took all the precautions which a most shrewd and statesmanlike intellect could suggest. He sent on his present to meet Esau arranged with an eye to cumulative effect. He removed his family to the other side of the Jab-bok, and all his stuff. Then, when all was completed, he went back in the darkness to the now empty camp, "entering into his closet," to have it out with God.

His prayer in the daytime may surely be

taken as a sample of the wrestling that went on that night. The peculiarity of that recorded prayer is the double grip it takes upon the faithfulness of God to His own word and covenant. "Thou hast said, 'I will deal well with thee.'" (Shall we, then, be destroyed?) "Thou hast said, 'I will multiply thy seed as the sand of the sea.'" (Shall they, then, be cut off?) The strength of his position is this taking hold upon God to do as He hath said and keep His covenant. This was strong ground. This was holy ground, and it was undeniably his. On this he could plant his feet and be omnipotent with God. O the vigor that the covenant heritage put into the wrestling of Jacob! What God had promised his business-like mind saw he had a covenant right to obtain, and he laid human hands on the Divine Personality, and said what he meant, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

It was not the human strength put into his wrestling that conquered his mysterious companion. That Jacob himself and all succeeding generations might understand this, the mighty

hand was put forth, and touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and in a moment it was out of joint as he wrestled with Him. The touch of that hand was enough, had the will behind it so determined, to have withered Jacob's natural strength into nothingness.

But the halting wrestler, though a worm of the dust, having that covenant grip upon the honor of his God, had a hold upon Him which, according to the very essence of His nature, He was everlastingly powerless to shake off. Shake off! He *couldn't* shake it off. Could a mother unclasp the arms of her little child that has clung to her neck for safety from a terror? Far sooner could any mother do that than that the everlasting God the Lord could shake off a human soul that has clasped its confidence about the simple truthfulness of His word. Is there any other way a human being can give such joy to the heart of God as by taking such a hold upon His simple *faithfulness*?

The heart of the mysterious stranger towards the halting wrestler comes out after that seemingly cruel touch.

“What is thy name?”

And he said “Jacob.”

And he said, “Thy name shall be no more called Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men.” And he blessed him there.

Is it not the same heart and the same mouth, that said to the woman of Canaan, “O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”

Years before, Jacob, the Supplanter, had prevailed to obtain the covenant blessing from his father. Now Israel, the Prince, through the vantage then gained, had prevailed to obtain the covenant blessing direct from Jehovah Himself. What deeper hold was now given for further conquests we are not told, but Jacob himself refers to them when he says to Joseph, “The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.”

What artist could throw upon the canvas the face of the halting patriarch as he left Peniel to go and meet Esau? Weariness must have shown

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in his countenance—probably pain, for the thigh out of joint meant physical damage. But it was the chastened face of a conqueror—of one who has again prevailed to receive his heart's desire, with the "exceeding abundantly above" that comes from a glimpse into the heart and purposes of God. Fear of Esau? Not a shadow of it! He went to meet Esau with the yearning love of a penitent brother, and the simple confidence that the angry soldier had not an atom of power to go one hair'sbreadth beyond the purposes of the God of Peniel. It may have been nothing else than the brother Christ shining out of the face of Jacob that melted the heart of the angry Esau. We read of no halo round his head, or need of a veil, as in Moses' case. The glory that shined from Jacob's face is a glory that the world needs. It is better not veiled. It is the glory that comes from covenant fellowship with God. It is the only Bible that the world can understand. It is the Bible that is yet going to "fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

From this period Jacob's life is a succession of sorrows. The cruelty of Simeon and Levi, the death of his beloved Rachel, the loss of Joseph, the wickedness of his sons, and the heavy anxieties of the time of famine, give an ample foundation for his own account of it:—"Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been."

Did this Prince in prevailing prayer win no more victories? Was that Peniel night the culminating point of his life of faith?

One question has deeply interested me lately. Is not Jacob's the first instance on record of a whole family being converted to God?

Twelve sons, ten of them evidently well started on the downward track, become men of humility, men of filial and brotherly love, men fitted in God's sight to become founders of the twelve tribes of His sacred people, and to have their names kept in everlasting remembrance, written on the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem itself. This would be looked upon as a Gospel wonder in our own better days. How is it to be accounted for in those days of no churches,

no Bibles, no Christian society, and only dim Old Testament light? Here are results; where and what are the causes?

Is not this the evident explanation of the moral wonder? Planting his feet upon the covenant blessing received from his father, Jacob had prevailed to obtain the deliverance of his family from the threatened physical destructions of Esau. Planting his feet next upon the covenant blessing received from his Peniel companion, he prevailed to obtain the deliverance of his family from the moral destructions threatened by the Prince of Darkness.

It is not to be conceived the blessing given him on that early morning was merely a repetition of that received from Isaac. Jacob himself declares that it was "beyond the blessing of his progenitors," and reached to the "utmost bound of the everlasting hills." It could not be really richer than the covenant with Abraham, but with that blessing came an insight into its riches that few have attained. From that time this Israel priest began to know how to pray down New Testament blessings in Old Testament times.

Thus he was able to pass on the covenant blessing to his twelve sons, instead of merely to one, as with Abraham and Isaac.

That Jacob saw farther into the Gospel glories of the Abrahamic covenant than either Abraham or Isaac would appear from the clearness of his statements in his parting benedictions. He spoke of the coming Messiah as the Shepherd, as the Stone of Israel, as Shiloh, unto whom the gathering of the people shall be. Jacob walked through this world, in it, but not of it. The key-note of his life is given in the interjected expression of his death-bed, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord."

Jacob was of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. "*The secret of the Lord was with*" him, and *He*, even in those far-off, dim days, had *shewn* him *His covenant*.

In the light of the preceding story, two passages in Isaiah become full of meaning. 1st. "I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father," and 2nd, The three steps in consecration, "One shall say I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another

shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and *surname himself by the name of Israel.*"

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One thing has often made my spirit burn within me on reading disquisitions on Jacob's character and doings. He has been called mercenary, tricky, selfish, naturally of meaner qualities than his more generous-hearted brother. On what foundation does all this rest?

Jacob was certainly of an intensely acquisitive turn; but his desires were all after the things of heaven, not the things of earth.

When he left his father's tent, which was the home of a wealthy man, he left it with only his staff. His heart was full with the newly-received blessing; but of the wealth of this world he carried away nothing at all.

This need not have been so, had he been mercenary. There was wealth in Isaac's tent. His mother was with him. She could easily have filled his pockets with valuables. Had she even slipped in among her motherly providings the two golden bracelets that Eliezer had clasped upon her own arms in her maiden-

hood—they would have been something to start with. But he does not seem ever to have thought of such a thing. There was in Jacob's heart the exclusive power of another affection. It did not need the "expulsive power," for the love of the world had no place there.

When he entered the service of Laban, there was not a word about wages, except the hand of the girl he loved. It is not hard to suppose that, if he had asked for it, he might have received that hand without any seven years of service. No such purchase price was demanded of Isaac for Rebekah. But Laban was keen-witted. It was no shrewd, business-like Eliezer he had to deal with this time, and he demanded and got the seven years of whole-hearted service.

When the wrong sister was given to Jacob, and seven years more of service was asked for the right one, any man who wanted to get on in the world would naturally have answered, "No; I have served seven years for the wife I want. As I have Leah, I will keep her, but I will not serve for her. Give me my wife." It really looks something like rank simplicity for Jacob



patiently to measure out seven more years for Rachel. But he did it.

But by the time the second seven years was over, circumstances were most naturally planting some new ideas in Jacob's unworldly head. A family was gathering around him, and he began to realize that it was time for him to begin to "provide for his own house also." Still, he never suggests wages to Laban. All he proposes is that he may be allowed to go away and work for himself.

Up to this point the whole tenor of Jacob's life forbids the first idea of a mercenary spirit. But just here, for the next six years, something wakes up in him which is never seen either before or after.

Laban proposes wages. Jacob is no fool after all. He knows by this time the man he has to deal with. If there is going to be wages, he will arrange things so that Laban shall no longer have the chance to think him a simpleton. Ten times Laban changes his wages, but every time the fool is answered according to his folly—the sharper is met by a sharpness that is too

many for him. Laban is beaten at his own weapons.

What aroused this sudden exhibition of worldly policy ?

1st. The necessities of a rising family.

2nd. Jacob's nature was an intense one. What he did, he did with all his might. Is he seeking the covenant blessing ? He *lives* for it. Is he seeking Rachel's love ? He knows how to work for it, and to *wait* for it (a harder test), and to do both with such joy of heart that the seven years seem like seven days to him. Is he seeking the blessing of the heavenly stranger ? He wrestles all night, and wins it. When such a man, with God in his favor, wakes up to conquer this world's riches, he will do it.

3rd. God meant to pass over much of Laban's wealth to Jacob. It was His fulfilling beforehand this word of Christ's mountain sermon, "Blessed are the meek, for *they shall inherit the earth.*" He meant Jacob to spoil Laban as he meant Israel to spoil the Egyptians.

4th. But I cannot help thinking that, what stirred this unworldly man so to measure his

wit with his uncle's was, probably, mainly the character of Laban himself, when his eyes were clearly open to see it. For these closing years in Padan-Aram, he set himself to outwit the sharper, and he did it.

Once he has seen the last of Laban, there is not another trace of the worldly spirit. He moves through this world, in it but not of it, for he is "looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Surely Jacob has been much misunderstood, and, consequently, the Church has failed to get the power out of his story that it was meant to convey. The secret of his life has been missed. Many have taken selfishness as the key-note and then the whole life makes miserable discord. If we take the desirableness and the power of covenant relations with God as the key-note, such expressions as these become full of meaning: "I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob, thy father." "Another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." "Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." "I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them."

## CHAPTER XII.

### *THE STORY OF EBENEZER; OR, THE SACRIFICIAL BLOOD IN INTERCESSION.*

THE story of Jacob illustrates the power of the covenant in intercession. The story of Ebenezer illustrates the power of sacrificial blood in intercession. These two, the covenant and the blood that underlies it, are arguments for faith in prayer, and for response from God to prayer, that shall yet nerve to the intercession that shall win the world for Christ. "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

Let us study the story of Ebenezer.

At the call of Samuel, all Israel gathered together to Mizpeh to seek God. There they confessed their sins and entered freely into covenant with Him to be His people.

The Philistines, jealous of any exhibition of national life in the people they were trampling under their feet, quickly assembled themselves in an ominous counter-gathering against the Mizpeh congregation of worshippers. As for these worshippers, they knew right well from years of bitter experience that they were not able themselves to meet these terrible Philistines in battle. How could they, seeing now their disloyalty as they had not seen it before—how could they expect the God of Joshua to make bare His holy arm in their behalf? But in Him was their only hope of victory, and their parting petition to Samuel as they set their faces toward their enemies, was: "Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us."

How could Samuel pray down victory from a holy God upon a people laden with iniquity, and whose present repentance he knew only too well was both partial and superficial? That was the task laid upon him—to pray down victory from a holy God upon an army that was full of sin, an army most of whom did not even know the God to whom they were looking.

Does not the same task often make Christian faith stagger? And is it not well to make a serious study of Samuel's method and its success?

The prophet had an equation to solve with two unknowns in it:  $x$ , Israel's present need, and  $y$ , Israel's demerit. Now, it is plain that  $x$  could not be worked out in positive value so long as that indeterminate, but awfully negative,  $y$  hampered operations. Every High School boy knows that that otherwise hopeless  $y$  can be eliminated by the addition of another equation in which  $y$  appears as a positive quantity. This Samuel did, according to God's own marvellous moral algebraics. He introduced the sacrificial equation, in which the blood of the dying lamb represented the blood and righteousness of the coming Christ. The positive merit of the sacrifice cancelled the negative merit of Israel, so that Samuel's equation appeared with the  $y$  completely cancelled, and  $x$  stood out in its beautiful, solid value in a sweeping victory for Israel, and an Ebenezer for all subsequent students of the story.



Dropping the figure—when Samuel undertook to pray down victory upon a sinful people, he knew he must first settle the matter of sin, or there could be no gracious answer. So, according to God's published Levitical Gospel, he took a sucking lamb, laid his hand on its head, confessing Israel's sinfulness and laying it all on the lamb. Then he slew the lamb and offered it up on the altar. Now sin was settled. Now Samuel could pray for Israel *exactly as if they were a holy people*. And the holy God could give victory *exactly as if they were a holy people*, because of that little lamb burning on the altar, which was accepted to make atonement for them—at-one-ment for them, *all* that alienated put away.

These two prayer studies, Jacob and Samuel, give the double foundation on which effectual prayer rests. If we would prevail in prayer, we need to know that the thing we ask for is according to His will. If it is according to His promise, it is according to His will, for He has never promised what He has not a mind to perform. It is our privilege, then, to seek for a

promise, as Jacob did, in which God has undertaken to do the very thing we want Him to do. Having found our promise, let us go back to God with it, as Jacob did, and tell Him plainly, as Jacob did, "*Thou hast said this; now do for me as thou hast said.*" Here we can take fast hold, and give Him no rest till He does as He hath said. God cannot "rest" under prayer like this, for it touches His honor every time, as well as the fountain of love that is in His heart.

But in attempting to pray this prevailing prayer, how constantly we are met, as Samuel was, by that awful unknown quantity, sin, in ourselves and those for whom we want to prevail. This is what makes it so hard to pray with anything like a triumphant faith. For our moral nature realizes that it is vain to expect to pray down victory and blessing from a holy God upon sinful people. There is at most only a hope which struggles vainly to become confidence.

Just here is the place to study Samuel's method with his slain lamb. Just here is the place to turn our own eye and God's upon the blood

shed on Calvary, to rest in the value of that blood as entirely adequate to meet the sin of the case we have in hand, and to expect an answer to our covenant prayer as if sin were not in the way at all.

This is what is done in the 130th Psalm, which is such a model of humble, triumphant prayer as only the Holy Spirit could have given. It is well worth the minutest study, under God's own peculiar teaching, of anyone who wants to understand this matter of prevailing prayer.

In strong contrast with the boldness and victory of Jacob, wrestling with his feet on a promise, and the boldness and victory of Samuel pleading the efficacy of redeeming blood, is the timidity and failure of Abraham, pleading without reference to either for the inhabitants of Sodom.

It has been said that Abraham was really asking for the life of Lot, and that he got the answer to his prayer in Lot's deliverance. But there does not seem to be any foundation for that idea in the narrative. "Wilt thou not spare the place?" was Abraham's petition.

It is not surprising that Abraham's heart yearned over Sodom. He had, in the extremity of the city, thrown himself into the breach for Lot's sake. He faced five victorious kings with a band of household servants, and rescued, not only his nephew, but the whole population of the city from slavery. He had refused the wealth which was poured into his lap by the grateful king.

He had once, through the intercession of the Royal Priest of Salem, been mighty for the deliverance of that city, and his heart was still warm toward those whom he had so befriended. He set himself now to serve them again, not this time by weapons of war, but by prayer.

And his intercession was accepted as far as it went. There was real communion between him and God in the matter. Every advance he made God met. Yet it was not a prevailing prayer. "It wrought no deliverance in the earth." It could not be effective. There was no bottom to it except the supposed righteousness of ten supposed righteous men.

Abraham pleaded no promise as Jacob did.

He did not say, as he might have done, "Thou hast said, 'In thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed,'" pleading that the sinful families of poor Sodom might know the fulfilment of that unlimited promise. There would have been power in that plea.

He offered no sacrifice for the sinful city. Had he brought a lamb, and laid their sins upon its head, and offered it up as God's own appointed atonement, the sweet savor of the sacrifice would have been an unanswerable argument with Him.

But the prayer that had for its only foundation righteousness among the inhabitants of Sodom, had no bottom at all, and no power at all. Even though accepted, it had no results.

Are there not now prayers very much like Abraham's? Eager breathings after mercy and blessing for ourselves and others that have no bottom either in the pledged efficacy of redeeming blood, nor in the definite assurance of a blood-bought promise. Instead of the holy boldness that comes from the double argument of the blood and the promise, there is the trem-



bling timidity that is afraid of coming too near or asking too much. "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord," even if he be Abraham himself.\*

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This chapter may, perhaps, be most appropriately closed with a list of measures given to me some time ago.

After a season of prayer, the question was suggested, "Now, what may I expect to receive in answer?" One after another these measures came.

1st. I should expect to receive according to the merits of Jesus Christ, *not* according to my

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\*I have been strongly tempted to omit this illustration of Abraham's prayer for Sodom as liable to annoy those who have been accustomed to consider it almost a model prayer. But the more I think of it, the more I see that it perfectly applies, and I dare not pass it by. There is no fault found with Abraham—that were presumptuous indeed. He is the father of them that believe, but he had not mastered the double secret of prevailing intercession. It was left to Jacob to be the father of them that *prevail*. Abraham was a believer, but Jacob was an intercessor. What the world wants now is men who have mastered Jacob's secret.



own. He has taken mine, and fared accordingly, even unto death. He has transferred His merits to me, and I am to fare accordingly, even to a share in His own place in the very heart of His Father. If I am to receive according to the merits of Jesus Christ, it is *not* humility to expect little.

2nd. I may expect to receive according to the purchasing power of the blood of Christ in God's sight. What that blood has purchased, I have, in Christ, a business right to draw upon. Seeing it is the Father who puts the value on that blood, it must be something very like dishonoring both the Father and the Son for me to expect little in answer to my prayer.

3rd. I may expect an answer according to the efficient power of the Holy Ghost—"according to the power that worketh in us." What God the Son hath purchased, what God the Father hath promised, that, God the Holy Ghost is able to work out. The unbelief that expects little in answer to prayer does definite dishonor to each Person of the Trinity. We may "abound in hope because of the power of the Holy Ghost,"

expecting large things according to His omnipotence in achievement.

4th. A new class of measurements. Let me expect an answer to be measured out to me according to my need in *God's* sight, not merely according to my need in my own sight. If Laodicea gets out of the unsearchable riches of Christ simply according to her own estimate of her needs, she will get very little; but Jesus Christ advises her to put in a claim upon Him, having as its basis *His* estimate of her needs. Faith for large things grows as we let go our own thoughts about our needs, and let ourselves be led into God's thoughts on that subject.

5th. But it is not only our own personal needs that are to be supplied out of the fulness treasured up in Christ. His cause in this world needs from us at every point where it touches us, a living testimony to the preciousness and power of His salvation. We must be witnesses for Christ, either true or false ones, wherever we go. Are there not Christian men and women, even real ones, so poor withal, so dis-

contented, so un-Christlike, that those round about them can never believe that their heritage is a "goodly" one? Their daily life is continually bearing witness that what He hath promised, He is *not* able to perform. There are false witnesses among Christ's true followers who blacken His honor far more than any suborned men before the Jewish sanhedrim could do. Does not the cause—the honor—of our Lord in this world require overflowing grace to be measured out to us? When we think of the need of Christ's cause as it touches us, when we think of the illimitable, blood-bought supplies, when we think of Omnipotence ready to work in us and by us, shall it be difficult to expect in answer to prayer, grace enough at every step to make us ringing witnesses to the honor of our Redeemer? "What He hath promised He *is* able to perform."

6th. But there is a wider measure still. Think of the measureless need of Christless souls weeping and withering all over this sin-darkened world. Think of the hundreds of thou-

sands who know not Christ, in every corner of Christendom. Think of the hundreds of thousands in Mohammedan and Papal lands. Think of the thousand millions more of yearning, weary, blighted, hopeless lives in the outer darkness where even Christ's name is unknown. Shall we be content with anything short of the measure of the 67th Psalm: "God be merciful (*so* merciful) and bless us (*so* bless), and cause thy face to shine upon us (*so* to shine) *that* thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among *all nations*"?

7th. But there is a wider measure yet. The needs of the world, though measureless, are not infinite. Let us expect an answer according to the measure of the terms of the Covenant of Grace. Adequate cleansing out of the infinite fountain opened. Adequate life through the infinite light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Adequate power through the infilling of the infinite Spirit of the infinite God Himself. The terms of the new covenant are like the love of which it is

the legal, verbal expression, "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of them passeth knowledge."

"Lord, teach us to pray," not only for ourselves, but for the Church of Christ, giving Thee no rest till Thou make Thy Jerusalem a praise and a power in the earth.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *COVENANT PRAYER FOR COVENANT PEOPLE.*

GOD'S promises are the great teachers to guide us in prayer. When we find a promise, we know that it is His will to fulfil that promise, and we may present, in simplest confidence and perseverance, the covenant prayer for its fulfilment.

If we would intercede for God's covenant people, let us first find a promise that has been made to them. Take Isa. 43. 21—44. 8.

These sixteen verses are a highway for intercession. They may be taken as applying to the whole Israel of God, or to myself, as one of His people, or to any part of His Church that may be laid upon my heart or upon my care.

“This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.”



Suppose it is my Sabbath School class I am bringing before God, let me put it inside that verse, and hear Him say, "*This* people have I formed for myself: *they* shall shew forth my praise."

This is strong consolation, if I may really believe that the speaker means what He says. We shall not follow that "*if*." It is placed there simply that unbelief may see her own face.

This *is* strong consolation. This class has the Lord formed for Himself. His declared purpose is, They shall show forth His praise.

But is there not some mistake? There must be some reference to character. It must be to Philadelphia classes that this applies, *not* to Laodicean ones.

There certainly is some reference to character. The "*people*" in question are very particularly described. Let me see if the description fits my class.

1. They are a people who are restraining prayer. "But thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob." This fits Laodicea: "The rich and

increased with goods" do not call much upon God. It is the poor and needy who do that. Does this fit my class? Then they may be the people.

2. As to love, this is God's description of them, which could not well be worse. "Thou hast been weary of me, O Israel." Does this fit my poor class? Have I ever been painfully conscious that they are weary of instruction, weary of even the sweetest invitations, weary of the choicest dainties on Christ's table? Surely this does fit my class. Surely they must be the people.

3. Those God is describing are slack as to service. Their offerings are conspicuous either by their absence or their smallness. "Thou hast not honored me with thy sacrifices; thou hast not filled me with thy sacrifices." Does this fit my class? Are their collections small? Does their self-denial in the cause of Christ require a microscope to discover it? This must be the very people God is speaking of.

4. But there is another mark yet. They are not only slack in prayer, and slack in love, and

slack in service. They are laden with positive sin besides. "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." Does this fit my class? Do I see sin among them that makes my heart faint? Verily, there can be no doubt now. This class of mine is the very people God is speaking of, and He says, "I have formed them for myself, they shall shew forth my praise."

Surely this is a mystery! such a statement concerning such a people! No, it is not a mystery. We are told plainly in the next verse after this description just how it is going to be done.

Thank God, He does not lay the work on us. He does not say, "Go and teach them to be better." That would plunge us into a mystery at once, for most of us have learned already that we have no power at all to fulfil such a task.

But He does not say that, He says something quite different. He says, "I, *even I*, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake."

What are we specially taught by these words, "*even I*" in this promise?

These words, "*even I*" in this promise, teach us that God, who knoweth the heart of man, taketh notice of and is much grieved with, the mistake of looking to anyone else to do this work but Himself.

Let these words, *EVEN I*, be written out in large capital, illuminated letters. Let them be written out so that no reader can miss them. For God has announced that He is going to do this thing, but nobody else needs to try it.

Now let me look at this Laodicean class of mine. He has undertaken adequately to meet its sinfulness—to blot out its prayerlessness, its weariness, its selfishness, its positive iniquity, and to do it for His own sake, so that, instead of being a blot on the glory of His salvation, they shall be a "praise on the earth."

Is not this good news? He does not tell me to do it. He does not say they must do it themselves. He says *He* will do it. Is not this good news?

Why does He not do it, then? is the weary response of many a discouraged worker.

If He is not doing it in my class, it must be from one of two reasons.

It may be I have been very earnestly trying to do myself that which He has announced to be His peculiar work. He has said, "They shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord." He will do that, *and it shall be done*. Perhaps, forgetting that emphatic statement, I have been trying to teach that class myself to "know the Lord." If that is the case, then God cannot get at it. His glory He will not give to another.

2nd. It may be that I have forgotten to read and act on the next verse, "Put me in remembrance." God has promised to do the work, but He has given us as our part to "*put Him in remembrance*" of what He has undertaken to do. If I have been trying to do the work myself, instead of humbly and expectantly taking my place as His remembrancer, as He has appointed, is it any wonder that my class remains prayerless, and weary, and selfish, and defiled?

Now it is plain that the whole purpose of God relative to promise and prayer would be frustrated if the promises were to be fulfilled apart from intelligence or appropriation in

prayer on the part of those to whom they are made. A promise that is not understood, not appropriated, and not presented, lies a dead letter, exactly like a cheque that may be carried about in the pocket but is never presented to the bank teller. No one can fatten on bank cheques, but oneself and the poor all around may fatten on what bank cheques shall procure when properly presented.

Each clause of the 26th verse is worthy of close study. "Put me in remembrance," with its emphatic double, "Let us plead together." These are best studied by taking them up and doing it regarding some specific portion of God's Israel, be it a Sunday School class, a family, or any other that may be lying on our heart.

"Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified." For years these two clauses meant nothing to me; I could not see the force of them. Now they mean, "Plead guilty, that you may receive the effectual blotting-out promised." Plead guilty to the prayerlessness, the lukewarmness, the selfishness, the sin, of which I am accusing my people. Take your place, you and



yours, as in direful need of this effectual "blotting-out," *that* you may be justified, *that* the promise may be fulfilled in your case.

The sin and misery of the people to whom this promise is made are amplified in the last two verses of the 43rd chapter. The Divine power and fulness of the cure are amplified in the first eight verses of the 44th chapter. There is no need to explain these. The Spirit-taught will understand them better by deciphering them under His own direct teaching. Those who are not Spirit-taught will fail to get their force from the most lucid explanation. But they are rich and glorious. They are "God's full flood," such a fountain of living water for Christian parents.

These sixteen verses constitute what I like to think of as one of the Isaiah forms of the new covenant. They are a highway for intercession in behalf of the whole Israel of God, literal or spiritual, or both.

We can best reach the needy wilderness by giving God no rest till He fulfil these promises, —till He establish, till He make Jerusalem a praise on the earth.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *COVENANT PRAYER FOR THE WILDERNESS.*

CAN we use the new covenant promises as a basis of intercession for those who are unmistakably "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise"?

They are certainly not included in its terms, and it is a matter worthy of the most careful study whether there is any way whereby this "children's bread" can be lawfully laid hold of for the "dogs."

Whatever answer may be given to that question, there is no need to postpone definite, prevailing intercession for these "aliens" to its affirmative settlement. Here is a "wilderness" promise which the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. It is therefore exactly as solid a basis

for covenant prayer as any covenant promise that ever was written.

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it; the excellency of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.”

There are three parties spoken of in this promise. 1st. The wilderness workers, *to whom* the promise is made. 2nd. The wilderness itself, *for* which the promise is made. 3rd. The outshining of the glory of the Lord, *by means of* which the promise shall be fulfilled.

1st. This promise, like all the rest, is made to the “heirs of promise.” It belongs especially to those members of God’s covenant household who have taken as their field of labor, or their field of intercession, the outside wilderness, wherever it may be found, among our own neglected and lapsed masses, or in the wild stretches of heathenism itself. It belongs in-

deed equally to all God's people, but, according to the nature He has given us, it will be appropriated and turned into reality only by those who have an appetite for it—only by those whose hearts are going out in yearning desire for blessing to the wilderness. Those who are content with blessing for themselves will leave it a dead letter in God's book.

To you, dear wilderness worker and wilderness intercessor, this promise is made. Read it, study its separate clauses, and see the breadth and length and depth and height of it, for truly it is like the love of Him who gave it—there is no limit to it.

The wilderness is to be glad because of you ; it is to rejoice and blossom as the rose through you. It is to blossom abundantly because you have lived and labored ; it is to rejoice even with joy and singing because you have believed and prayed and prevailed.

What sort of results are here *promised* ? and shall we be content with less ?

These are glorious promises, and shall yet reverberate in echoes from the Andes to the

Himalayas and the Mountains of the Moon. But there is an explicitness about the next clauses that will awaken glad echoes in the heart of Christ's workers beyond even the noise of the singing. Let us study the bold description given of the results this promise warrants us to claim from Him whose zeal is waiting to perform.

The glory of Lebanon "shall be given" unto the wilderness. The thorns and briers shall be turned into forests of cedars of Lebanon. What a prospect! Converts whose vigor and stability suggest to the eye of God, who is drawing the picture, the very monarch of the mountain! These are not weaklings. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, even the cedar-tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name. What arguments to bring before our God for converts that shall be "to the praise of the glory of His grace." He is able to give them to those who, upon His word of promise, are able to expect them. But He cannot give them to those who cannot expect them. He is then actually straitened, a fountain without a channel, or with

a channel like a straw, where he has rivers promised and all ready to pour forth.

"The excellency of Carmel" shall be given unto the wilderness. Carmel fruitfulness, vineyard reproductiveness. The woman of Samaria was a Carmel Christian. "Many believed on Him for the saying of the woman." The "little maid" in Syria was of the Carmel type. She "so spake" that Naaman "believed."

"The excellency of Sharon" shall be given unto the wilderness. Beauty and fragrance. "I am the Rose of Sharon," says our Lord. The excellency of Sharon is the "beauty of the Lord"—the very character of Christ over again. Joseph exhibits the Sharon type, beautiful and fragrant, spotless and beneficent, a rose of God's own gardening.

This is one of God's peculiar climaxes. Through cedar converts the heart is made glad; through Carmel converts Christ's kingdom comes; but through Sharon converts God himself is made known to men. It is through the prevalence and power of the Sharon Christians that the earth shall be covered with the know-



ledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

These are the converts promised to Christ's wilderness workers. Not weaklings, not feeble specimens that must be put up with for a generation or two till they begin to evolve Christian characteristics, but converts after the noblest patterns. What arguments to bring before God for converts who shall prove their origin, and be to the Lord for a name, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off! He is waiting to give them to those who, upon His word of promise, are able to expect them; but He cannot give them to those who cannot expect them.

2nd. Though this marvellous promise is manifestly made *to* the people of God, it is quite as manifestly full charged with blessing *for* the wilderness. Blessing of largest measure to every kindred and people and tongue and nation is bound up in the heart of our God. But *how can* it reach the outlying wilderness except through His believing people as a channel?

Some one has said that the curse which had

to be pronounced on sinful man, directed by the hand that loved man, "fell slant," and descended on the ground instead, and the earth became a wilderness of thorns and briers. Now, when the same heart of love does its congenial work and aims blessing for the moral wilderness, that, too, must "fall slant" in a promise to His own people, for it is only through them that blessing can reach the region of the curse.

What is wanted in order that the covenant riches treasured up in Christ should leap out and cover the world's wilderness with glory, is *channels*—those who, already in covenant with God, will look at the promise, will believe it and claim it, and "obtain" it in actual fulfilment.

But how can ordinary, staggering Christian faith be strengthened to believe and obtain such large promises as these? The promise itself explains it, for it states—

3rd. The *means by which* it is going to be fulfilled. It is by the outshining of the glory of the Lord. They all shall know Him, from the least of them to the greatest of them. "They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."

In studying this promise, it will be readily seen that there are two pronouns used, *they* and *it*. It will also be easily seen that when "*they*" is used Christ's workers are spoken of, and when "*it*" is mentioned the wilderness is denoted. "*They shall see the glory of the Lord.*" *They*—the wilderness workers—"they have seen the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God," and therefore they have had faith to believe and obtain the promise and so to turn the wilderness into a garden of the Lord. They have been able to do it in this way. The glorious Lord has promised it. They have so apprehended the glory of that glorious Lord that they have believed He meant what He said. They have taken hold for the fulfilment and received it. Those who do not see the glory of the Lord *stagger at the largeness of the promise and fail.*

This is the right end of the promise to take hold of first. "Show *me*, Lord, according to thy word, thy glory, that I may be able to grasp the breadth and length and depth and height of this promise."

O that men would see the connection there is between these two. The worker that knows little of the glory of the Lord can believe but a little of the promise, and so can pass but a meagre share of blessing to the wilderness. But the soul that knows much of the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God, he can believe anything God has said, and *he* can be a channel full to overflowing of life and power to all around him. "*They that dwell under his shadow* shall return; they shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine, and the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon."

What is this *glory of the Lord* that must be manifested to all effective wilderness workers?

In its amplest meaning, it is the name, the character of the Lord. When Moses pressed close to his Divine Friend with the petition, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," God proclaimed *His name* before him. This was His glory. And the name proclaimed was simply a Divine setting forth of His own character. "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in

goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."

This is the Lord's own way of showing His glory, just allowing His divine character in all its attributes to shine out into the intelligence and soul of the worshipper, so that he shall know his God. So to see the glory of the Lord is to be changed into the same image from glory to glory, and the wilderness worker that has so seen the glory of the Lord, and so been transformed into the very image of Christ, shall surely do the work of Christ with the power of Christ.

But I think I see a definiteness in this expression which, to me, greatly increases the power of it.

Though the amplest meaning of "the glory of the Lord" is undoubtedly His full, glorious character in all its attributes, have we any foundation in Scripture for setting up any one of His attributes as being, in a special sense, *the*



glory of the Lord. The knowledge of the covenant is *the* secret ; is there any attribute which God himself has placed as *the* glory ?

In the 138th Psalm we find the expression, "Thou hast magnified *thy word* above all thy name." The name of the Lord is the glory of the Lord, and here it is expressly stated that He has magnified *His word* above the whole of it. That certainly looks as if, as far as this world is concerned, He sets His truth, His faithfulness, as the highest attribute of all.

Years ago I complained to a friend that, though I found it easy and sweet to *trust* God, my *love* for Him was coldness itself. The answer was, "What God wants from His people now, more than anything else, is that they shall put faith in Him. Love will come as we know Him better. When we shall see Him as He is, we shall love Him with all our heart. But there is nothing He wants from us now as He wants *faith*."

Now, faith in God is the soul's response to apprehended faithfulness. If, then, God has made faith *the* requisite in a Christian life, He must



have set His own faithfulness, which alone can inspire faith, as *the* glory of His revealed character.

Again, in the Apocalyptic vision of the everlasting glory, the *one* ornament round about the throne is the rainbow halo. God has Himself put it past doubt what that means, as the rainbow must forever stand as a symbol of His covenant faithfulness. By this marvellous touch of His divine pencil has He not written in illuminated letters under His own faithfulness, "*The* glory of the Lord, *the excellency* of our God?"

But there is a crowning proof that *the* glory of the Lord is His faithfulness. In Rev. 11, 15, there is a song sung in heaven, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." The next three verses give the Amen to that song given by the four and twenty elders. The next verse is, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the *ark of his Testament*, and there were lightnings and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." Then there were *results*.

Is it fanciful to infer from this passage that the sight of the Testament, the apprehension of God's faithfulness and that to which it is pledged, the sight of "the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God"—that that vision is the *cause*, and the conquest of the kingdoms for Christ is the *result*?

If this passage stood alone, it might be deemed insufficient warrant for such a conclusion. But it does not stand alone. Compare with it the triumphant vision in the 19th of Revelations, beginning at the 11th verse. Here again we have heaven opened. This time it is not the ark of the Testament that is seen, it is the Testator Himself. "And, behold, a white horse, and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. . . . And He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself. . . . And His name is called the Word of God." To the armies that followed, the conspicuous double name of their Captain is but one, it is the apprehended faithfulness, pledging the apprehended promise, the faithfulness and truth of the living God backing the whole Word of God. It

is well to notice that this Rider has a further name, beyond the double title written in plain letters. But the breadth and length and depth and height of that name "no man knoweth but He Himself." Enough for the armies that follow Him to see Him as Faithful and True, and to see the Word of God as identical with Himself, even His very Name. Truly as the Captain of the finally-victorious hosts He has "magnified his word above all His name." These hosts have all had their eyes opened to see in very deed "the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God," and "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

So the wilderness waits in its death and misery until Christ's people have their eyes opened to see the faithfulness of God pledging every word of God, so that, in following a promise they are following Himself. Dr. Mackay, of Formosa, saw the glory of that Rider upon the white horse. "I cannot be discouraged," he said, "because Jesus Christ my Lord is God the Creator, and *because God means every word He*

says." Those who so see the glory of the Lord have power through Him to conquer, because their heart is enlarged to claim His largest promises and to "obtain" them.

What we want is simply to see *that God means every word He says*, and that the blood of Jesus Christ is gloriously ample ground for the claiming *as our own* the richest promises He has written. What channels of blessing will open for the wilderness when Christ's workers learn these two things! Then the rod of His power shall go forth out of Zion, and the world shall become His own.

"Lord, that our eyes may be opened, *according to Thy Word.*"

## CHAPTER XV.

### *DOES THE POSSESSION OF A COVENANT WITH GOD ENSURE THE FULFILMENT OF THE SAME?*

FACTS will best answer this question.

Esau was in legal possession of the covenant heritage of the sacred family. But he despised it, and sold his interest in it for a mess of pottage.

The people who marched out of Egypt after the pillar of cloud were in full possession of the covenant sworn to Abraham. God Himself fed them with it, when they "were broken with anguish of heart and cruel bondage." "Say to the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the bondage, and I will redeem you, and I will take you unto me for a people, and I will bring you in unto the

land concerning which I swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I will give it you for an heritage. I am the LORD."

"Moses so spake unto the children of Israel, *but they hearkened not.*" There is the key-note of their whole wilderness conduct. Instead of welcoming the covenant promise, twice over signed with the Jehovah signature, and rejoicing in it, and meeting all their difficulties with it, as abundant security for them against every threatened disaster, they hearkened not, they believed not, they rejoiced not, *and they entered not.* Thus they dishonored God's covenant until the oath that had been their title to the land of promise became the impassable bar against their ever entering it, for "He swore in His wrath. They shall not enter into my rest."

They entered not because of unbelief. They did not, they could not, forget the covenant God had made to bring them into the good land, but they never seriously believed that He stood pledged to tax all His divine resources to do it for them. As soon as they realized that they could not conquer the land by their own might,



they at once gave up hope of ever getting it, doing thereby deepest dishonor to the God who had given His word and His oath that He would put them in possession.

To this day many fall short of their full covenant inheritance for exactly the same reason. They really do not believe that God intends to do for them what He has promised, and "they enter not because of their unbelief."

But is there not a vast number who fail for a different reason? They do not actively disbelieve the covenant, for they have never known that they are in possession of one. They do not know it, they do not claim it, and so they cannot enter into the fulfilment of it. You cannot speak of that as unbelief. It is only forgetfulness, or simple ignorance. But a cheque forgotten will be as inoperative for blessing as a cheque distrusted.

There is a point here that needs definite attention and discrimination. Many fall into the mistake of speaking of God's promises as sure of fulfilment because of their utter reliability. The cheque illustrates this point perfectly.

It may be in full legal possession. It may be as reliable as the Bank of England, and conceivably as rich. But if it is either distrusted or forgotten, so that it is never presented, it yields not a farthing to the possessor. As regards the promises, in veritable dead earnest, "according to your faith be it unto you." He who believes only a little of their infinite fulness gets only a little, while he who is ever seeking to reach out after God's great thoughts in His great words, will be able to comprehend, and to apprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of the fulness of God treasured up for him in these promises, though it forever passes knowledge.

The following three chapters exhibit the tremendous consequences of this forgetfulness concerning the existence of covenant hold upon God. They occupy a unique position to the rest of this volume. They are really the germ out of which the book has sprung.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *THE TREATY OF ARARAT A FORGOTTEN WEAPON AGAINST FAMINE.*

FAMINE in East Africa ! Famine in China ! Famine in Central India ! It makes one afraid to think. What must be the prolonged complication of miseries when it can be said that hundreds, thousands, even millions of parents and little children have died of starvation, and the ulcers and fevers which it breeds ? War is terrible, but famine is worse.

What weapons have we to wield against this monster misery ? Money may do much. Wise legislation may do more. But unless some more powerful weapon than either of these is found, famine will yet many times over slay his tens of thousands.

Is there a more effective weapon than these ?

For the last three years the writer has been deeply impressed by the thought that there lies an article—a long forgotten article—in the Treaty of Ararat, which, if called to remembrance, and honestly claimed in terms of the Treaty, would effectually protect from famine any part of this earth inhabited by the descendants of Noah.

Before passing this over as a delusion or a joke, will the reader first carefully consider the Scripture account of that Treaty of Ararat, or God's covenant with Noah.

As Noah stepped out of the ark upon the smiling, but depopulated earth, he gathered his family about him for a most remarkable act of worship.

His heart, as the father of all the human tribes that should ever re-inhabit the earth, was loaded with fears that could find no relief but in a sacrifice, and that the completest sacrifice that it was in the power of man to present. Every clean beast and every clean bird was represented upon that altar. What could he do more to secure a sacrifice worthy of the occa-

sion? In that judiciously elaborate sacrifice it is easy to see the intelligent worshipper reaching out toward a sacrifice that should be adequate indeed—the heart awakened to the sinfulness and danger of sin in himself and in his household through all their coming generations, reaching out, perhaps blindly, to the perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ.

The same principle is to be seen in God's own arrangements for the great Day of Atonement. A bullock, a ram, and a slain and a living goat—all these enter into the expiatory ordinances of the day, each doing its own part in foreshadowing the complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is not Solomon's plan of ostentatiously multiplying the number of victims. It is Noah's, presenting a representative of each of the animals appointed for sacrifice.

The same principle appears in the variety of animals whose shed blood lies at the foundation of the covenant made with Abraham—a heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. (Gen. 15. 9.)

As the offerer was thus reaching out toward

the blood of Christ in the offering, God smelled a sweet savor in it, and gave a most marvellous covenant on account of it. The blood of the sacrifice is the "blood of the covenant": that is, it is the ground on which it was given, and upon which it stands, and upon which it can be claimed. The rainbow in the clouds is its token.

With such a foundation for this covenant, no surprise need be felt if the blessings contained in it for the descendants of Noah should be surpassing great. With such a seal set to it as the many-colored arc of the circle of glory surrounding the very throne of God (Rev. 4. 3; Ezek. 1. 28), we are meant to understand that these blessings are secured to us with a certainty for which that very throne itself is given us as surety. When God says to Noah and his sons, "I will look upon the bow that I may remember the everlasting covenant." He indicates that there is continuous blessing in it for all generations of men, that He wants them to remember this, and is continually summoning them to remember it every time He sets His bow in the clouds.



The general impression seems to be that the only benefit deeded to the race by this rainbow-sealed covenant is protection from another universal deluge. Man has forgotten that there is vastly more in it than this. Here is one of the promises it contains : " While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

If this is a covenant promise to Noah and his seed, then the fulfilling of it is a treaty right, and can be claimed and obtained by the descendants of Noah in *any* part of the earth. But this claim must be grounded upon the sacrificial blood, on account of which at first the covenant was given, and through which alone it can be validly claimed.

When the showers are withheld, and there is no seed-time, as has been the case in both India and China, it is time for those who believe in the God of Noah to gather together to remind Him of His promise, and claim, as a *blessed covenant right*, the fulfilling of it. Then He will look upon the bow (He need wait for no showers

or clouds for that look, for the rainbow is the one ornament round about His throne continually,) and remember His covenant, and this special term of it,—“Seed-time and harvest shall not cease.”

The sinfulness or holiness of the people to be benefited does not, it seems to me, enter into the question. The covenant is made out to the descendants of the man who offered that complete sacrifice on Mount Ararat. It can be claimed by or for any of Noah's seed. The righteousness of Noah or his seed was not the ground on which the covenant was given. The blood of that Christ-foreshadowing sacrifice was God's ground for giving it, and that must be the simple and all-sufficient ground for claiming it and the fulfilment of any one of its promises.

If these things are so, then, when rain is needed for a proper seed-time, it is not mere prayer that is wanted, in the ordinary meaning of that word, it is the bold putting in of a covenant claim to a precious covenant right, to be claimed *as descendants of Noah, and on the ground of sacrificial blood*. For the abundant answer

of such covenant prayer in the signal fulfilment of such covenant promise, we are to take the rainbow in the clouds as our covenant pledge, and be as sure of the answer before it comes as we are after. So shall we honor God's covenant and enjoy it, and famine shall be baffled at every turn he makes. Besides that, the Bible shall take its place in simplicity as the Word of God in the earth.

If these things are so, is it not true that the Treaty of Ararat should be exhumed from the archives of the past? Is it not time that its terms should be made a matter of study and of honest experiment? May it not be that God, who yearns over the human race with a pity that is Divine and infinite, has found it necessary to send famine after famine upon the world, that His people, long dead to the gentle reminders of the ever-recurring rainbow, may at last be waked up by these thundering calls, to remember His covenant, which has lain in the Bible a dead letter for so many generations?

"Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *GOD'S COVENANT WITH THE GIBEONITES —A FORGOTTEN WEAPON AGAINST SAUL.*

IF God's covenant with Noah is still in force (and it must be, so long as the rainbow bedecks the clouds), then the one reason why famine gets hold upon any part of this earth is that Noah's sons have forgotten it. Forgetfulness is a fruitful source of loss in every direction; but when it comes to forgetfulness of such a covenant promise as this, "Seed-time and harvest shall not cease," and the consequent loss of the fulfilment of the same, it is surely time that stupid memories should be stirred up into activity.

It is no new thing for man thus to forget his covenant opportunities with God. A sorrowful instance of just such forgetfulness, preceded by

a signal instance of the opposite conduct, is to be found in the story of the Gibeonites.

The inhabitants of Gibeon, in the days of Joshua's conquests, in spite of difficulties that seemed insurmountable, had succeeded in securing a covenant or league with the people of Israel and the God of Israel.

It was a narrow affair, securing only their lives, not their liberties, for it left them bondmen to the sacred people. But it was like all God's covenants with men, it was sure.

As soon as it was known in Canaan that Gibeon had gone over to Israel, all the kings of the hills, and of the valleys, gathered together against them.

What could the Gibeonites do?

They knew right well what to do. They *had* a *covenant*, and they promptly claimed it. It was no vague cry for mercy that was sent to Gilgal. It was the bold, almost imperative, covenant claim. "Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites are gathered together against us."

The answer to this covenant-prayer was just what you would expect when the covenant-faithfulness of the living God was involved. Joshua, with the ringing assurances of his God in his ears, marched all night. In the morning he came upon Gibeon's enemies suddenly. "And the Lord discomfited them before Israel. . . . And the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them. . . . Then Joshua spake, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Aijalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed." All this was God's answer to the cry of the people, who remembered in their time of need that they had a covenant, and put in their claim for its fulfilment.

But these poor Gibeonites were not always so wise. Years went by. Generation after generation lived and died, and the covenant at first so eagerly sought and so dearly prized, came to be only an old story amongst them. Israel asked a king, and God gave Saul. This warrior king was full of crooked blunders. He was slack in dealing with the Amalekites, whom



God had doomed with a sentence of death ; and he was cruel in his dealings with the Gibeonites, whom God had fenced round with a covenant of life.

But what did he care for the covenant made with the cities of Canaan five hundred years before ? Perhaps he cared just about as much as the Salisbury Government to-day would care for a treaty made with the gipsies by Richard II. one hundred years before the discovery of America, especially if the treaty was one which the gipsies themselves had forgotten. How much attention would the politicians of to-day pay to such a treaty ? Just about as much did Saul pay to the covenant with the Gibeonites. If some warning voices were raised amongst his people, he paid no heed. He looked only to the (supposed) interests of his own people, and turned his murderous might against the strangers.

What should Gibeon have done the moment she saw Saul's evil eye upon her ? Just exactly what she did in Joshua's days. Right up into the ears of Jehovah she should have sent the

old covenant cry, "Slack not thy hand from thy servants: come up to us quickly, and save us and help us, for the king of Israel himself has gathered his armies together against us." The Lord's hand was not shortened, neither was His ear heavy; but He listened in vain for that covenant cry, and Saul did his deadly work unhindered—deadly work for the Gibeonites, for their blood reddened the land, and deadly work for Israel, for that shed blood cried aloud to heaven for judgment, and got it.

Saul's reign ended under the thunderstorms of defeat and disaster. But all these calamities did not settle for the blood of the Gibeonites. David's reign ushered in victory and prosperity, but the blood of the slaughtered Gibeonites was not brought to mind. Year after year was given to David, and his now peaceful kingdom, to call to remembrance the violated covenant. David had forgotten, and Israel had forgotten, as well as the Gibeonites, all about that old covenant. They all forgot that it was still in force.

But God had not forgotten. His judgments

visited the land in the days of David three years, year after year. And David enquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered, "It is for Saul, because he slew the Gibeonites."

God had not forgotten, though Israel had done so, and Gibeon too. Had the harassed people remembered this covenant they could have laughed at Saul's malice, as they had in olden days defied the combined wrath of the Canaanitish kings. But they forgot their covenant, put in no covenant claim, and suffered to the death in consequence. Truly, it is a serious thing to forget a covenant. It is as though Englishmen were to forget their Magna Charta, and so lose the liberties it had deeded over to them.

Is not this latter story of the Gibeonites a perfect picture of the position of the whole human race relative to the ravages of famine? They have forgotten the treaty of Ararat. Four thousand years have buried it out of sight, and out of mind. The rainbow is still hung in the sky; God still looks on it and remembers His covenant; but man looks on it, and only says,

“How pretty!” When the rains are withheld, God listens in vain for the covenant cry. Noah’s descendants have forgotten the treaty made with their father in their behalf. They do not know its terms, they put in no claim on the strength of it, and famine works his will in the earth as Saul worked his will among the Gibeonites.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *THE NEW COVENANT--A FORGOTTEN WEAPON AGAINST SIN AND SATAN.*

IN the two preceding chapters, two other forgotten covenants have been touched upon—the covenant with Noah, a forgotten weapon against famine, and the covenant with the Gibeonites, a forgotten weapon against Saul. Here is a third, the breadth and length and depth and height of which is like the love of Him who gave it, it “passeth knowledge.” The terms of it are exceeding broad, the security for it is the faithfulness of the everlasting God Himself, committed in the two immutable things in which it is impossible that God should lie, His *word* backed by His *oath*. The pledge of this security is the rainbow in the clouds, symbol of the throne itself, referred to in the expression, “thy

faithfulness *round about thee.*" The peculiar seal of this covenant is the accepting of the wine at the communion feast. When Christ gave the wine to His disciples that Passover night He said of it, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; drink ye all of it." Those who intelligently accept that cup do, at the same time accept that covenant in all the breadth of its terms and the security of their fulfilment.

But what multitudes of believers could express their ignorance of these things as the Ephesian Christians did concerning the Holy Ghost? "We have not heard whether there be any new covenant." The covenant is forgotten, its terms are not understood, its absolute reliability is not even a matter of thought, and so the fulness of blessing and power secured in it to the followers of Jesus Christ is not enjoyed.

This is not too strong a statement. The fulness of blessing and power deeded over to us in that new covenant *is not enjoyed* in the Church. Anyone who cares enough about these things to study the three great covenant promises, as they



are expressed in Jer. 31. 32, 34, quoted in Heb. 8. 10-12, or in Ezek. 36. 25-27, can easily see that there is a completeness, a radicalness, a power, in these promises that is seldom to be met with as fulfilled in the actual life of actual, present-day Christians.

Has God promised more than He is able to perform? That is not the explanation of the failure of seed-time and harvest, but man has forgotten the covenant in which these things are deeded over to him. That is not the explanation of Saul's destructive power over the Gibeonites. They had forgotten the covenant in which the faithfulness and power of Jehovah were committed for their protection. That is not the reason either that sin and Satan are too strong for the Church, and for the individual believer. They, too, have forgotten that they have a *covenant*—that they have covenant right to all the mercy and all the grace necessary to make *them* more than conquerors through Him.

Let us see what God covenants to do for us in His three great covenant promises, as they are expressed in Ezek. 30. 25-27.

1st. He undertakes Himself thoroughly to deal with *all* our uncleanness. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye *shall be clean*. From *all* your filthiness and from *all* your idols will I cleanse you." Why, then, are we not cleansed? Has God undertaken to do what He is not able to do? Or have we forgotten that *He* has undertaken to do it?

2nd. He has undertaken Himself thoroughly to deal with our hearts. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." Why, then, are so many true Christians mourning hearts of stone?—hearts that will not love God and that do not know how to melt toward our neighbor? Has God undertaken to do what is too much even for Him? Or have we forgotten that *He* has undertaken to accomplish this thing in us?

3rd. He has undertaken to fill us with the very Spirit of Jesus Christ Himself. "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my

judgments and do them." In **this** promise He covenants that our spirit shall be the very **Spirit** of Christ, that our walk shall be step by step, *in* His statutes, that our actions shall be the doing or acting out of His judgments. Why is not all this fulfilled in our daily life and experience? Has God undertaken to do what He is unable to do? Or have we again forgotten that *He* has undertaken to do it?

Is not this the woeful mistake that is being made? We are continually trying to cleanse ourselves, and of course we fail. We are working away to soften our own hearts, and they remain as hard and cold and dead as ever. We are wearily trying to live out the life of Jesus Christ, while our own spirit is prompting every action. Is it not time that we should remember that all those matters are undertaken for us by the everlasting God the Lord, who has pledged His covenant honor that He will do them for us and in us?

Sin has the mastery over us as Saul had the mastery over the Gibeonites, because we have forgotten, as they did, that there is a covenant

of the Lord between us, and that our business is continuously and joyfully to *hold Him* to His covenant.

Sin and Satan have the mastery over our children for the same reason. We have forgotten that this covenant is like all God's covenants with men, it is "to us and to our children." Do they need cleansing? Let us confess their sins and our own, especially our own as they concern the children. Let us next lay our finger upon His covenant promise. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." Let us look up in His face and say, "Do it for us. Lord, *Do as Thou hast said.*" It is a bold position, but it is the one He has given us. When He gave us a covenant, He gave a covenant *right* to the blessings promised, and when we ask for them we ask for what is already *ours* in covenant. For Him to withhold would be to break covenant obligation. So we can press for them, and give Him no rest until He give them in their fulness, saying boldly, "In thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness." And so, resting in His

glorious covenant faithfulness, we can sing His praises for the answer before it comes, as the psalmist does in the 130th Psalm.

Some may object that this way of resting the salvation of our household upon God's covenant faithfulness will lead to carelessness in bringing up the children. It is also supposed that resting our sanctification upon God alone may lead to a careless and inert style of life. It is well known that the same objection has always been urged against resting our *justification* upon God alone. Facts and philosophy both tell dead against such an objection. It is those who shoulder their own burdens and try to fight their own battles who are continually sinking into discouragement and sloth. It is little wonder. They are continually conscious of defeat, and there is nothing takes the energy out of a soldier like that. Such fighting will become slack.

Those who rest the responsibility where God has placed it—on His own power and faithfulness—can rejoice with the joy of victory before it comes, even in the midst of seeming defeat. Victory that is theirs in covenant can be taken hold of as theirs in fact.

Such is the lawful portion of those who send up the covenant cry against their enemies. They may rejoice in faith as the Gibeonites did in fact while they were watching the prolonged victory of that double day—the sun standing still upon Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Aijalon.

But to those who forget their covenant hold, there may be, as to the Gibeonites in the days of David, only some sorrowful testimony or vindication of God's faithfulness—that *He* had been remembering all the time, that He had watched and waited in vain for the covenant cry which would have made a highway for His love and power to leap out for their deliverance.

It is a glorious thing to have a covenant hold upon God and His resources; but it is a most calamitous thing to forget the fact in time of need, and so to have to meet the foe in our own strength, which is weakness.



## SUPPLEMENTARY.

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THE following chapters are not an integral part of this book, but are so related to it as to render their presence important.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *BAPTISM AND THE SHORTER CATECHISM.*

Question 94. What is baptism ?

Answer. Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our engrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Question 95. To whom is baptism to be administered ?

Answer. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him ; but the infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptized.

Baptism is here declared to signify and seal three things. It is also stated that the infants

of those who are members of the visible Church are to be baptized. And there is not a note in the whole explanation of the subject to indicate that the ordinance in the case of infants, signifies or seals less than in the case of adults.

May I here ask a question which each reader will answer according to his own judgment on the facts of his experience? Is it usual amongst us for a parent, as he presents his child for baptism, to count that ordinance to signify and seal its engrafting into Christ, its partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and its engagement to be the Lord's? If he fails to do so, then either he or the catechism must be wrong. It is a position very dear to the heart of the writer that in this particular point our catechism is right.

Baptism, in the case of an adult, ought to be a real transaction between earth and heaven, in which there is active faith in the word of God on the part of the receiver of the ordinance, and certain, responsive grace on the part of God. If the faith be wanting, the baptism is a mere form, though a significant one. In the case of

the infant, it ought still to be a real transaction between earth and heaven, in which there is active faith upon the word of God on the part of the parent, and certain, responsive grace on the part of God. If the faith be wanting, the baptism is a mere form, though a significant one. In the case of the infant it ought still to be a real transaction between earth and heaven, in which there is active faith upon the word of God on the part of the parent, and certain responsive grace on the part of God. If the faith be wanting, the baptism is a mere form, though a significant one.

The efficacy of the ordinance in either case depends upon faith in the word of God.

Here is a promise, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house."

Notice, there are two parts in this promise, but they are equally true.

Individual faith in the first half of that promise engrafts the believer into Christ, gives him a right to all the benefits of the covenant of grace, and implies his engagement to be the Lord's, baptism which signifies and seals these three is the right thing.

Parental faith in the last half of that promise binds God's faithfulness to engraft the whole household into Christ, giving that whole household a right to all the benefits of the covenant of grace, and the making of them willing in the day of His power to yield themselves wholly over to be the Lord's. Is not baptism, which signifies and seals these three things, appropriate in the case of such a household, and does it not mean for the household exactly what it meant for the individual?

If the ordinance is administered in either case without faith taking hold of God's faithfulness, it is merely a form.

A parent so laying hold upon God's promise for his house has the same right to count the Divine faithfulness pledged to engraft that whole house into Christ that he has to count himself engrafted into Christ. The only difference is this: His faith for himself engrafts him instantaneously, whereas his faith for his household may still leave the matter of time in God's hand. He may be kept waiting for the fulfilment of the promise as "those that watch for

the morning." But he has a right to do his watching as the night-watchers do theirs, in the glad confidence that it is coming, and not one moment behind time either. All the time he is watching, he can in faith count it his already, deeded over to him in the word of promise, sealed to the child in the ordinance of baptism. He can mingle prayer with heartfelt thanksgiving for the answer which has not yet come, and so his joy and confidence will hallow God's name while he is watching.

Another most precious truth is this: A parent so laying hold of God's promise for his household has the same right to lay hold upon the covenant of grace for them that he has for himself. Does he see sin in his child, sin that perhaps covers his face with shame? He can put in his covenant claim for that child, not only that it shall be forgiven, but *cleansed from all unrighteousness*.

Does he find himself helpless to communicate the knowledge of God to the young souls committed to his care? He can put in his covenant claim that God Himself shall do that, until the



whole household shall "know Him," from the least of them to the greatest of them. Then the hearts of stone shall be hearts of flesh.

Does he yearn over his children, that they may have power to do Christ's work in this needy world? He can put in his covenant claim for the crowning promise, that God shall put His laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Then He shall be to them a God, and they shall be to Him a people—an army—able and eager to do His will in earth as it is done in heaven.

What, then, is the attitude of the believing parent in presenting his child in baptism? This is the attitude he has a right to take. He can look upon that ordinance as signifying and sealing to his child exactly what it signifies and seals to himself. He not only gives over his child to God, as Hannah did, to be His in life and in death, but he *accepts for the child*, on God's promise, its engrafting into Christ, its right to all the benefits of the covenant of grace, and its own future self-yielding to be the Lord's.

The writer has deep respect for the attitude of the Baptists concerning infant baptism, and also for those amongst ourselves who, in timidity and tenderness, refrain from presenting their children in baptism because they realize their own lack of faith in the matter, and perplexity as to the foundations of faith. Let such study the covenant hold given by God to parents, and they may find the foundations they have been missing.

## CHAPTER XX.

### *BAPTISM AND THE COVENANT.*

Recent studies concerning God's covenant dealings with men have led to three conclusions, which, as far as the writer is concerned, have placed the Shorter Catechism view of baptism upon the broadest possible foundation.

#### I.—GOD HAS ALWAYS DEALT WITH MAN BY MEANS OF COVENANT.

Bible students will promptly recall the covenant made with Adam, the covenant of sacrifice established immediately after the fall, and holding clear through to Christ's own day; and the peculiar covenant with Abraham, adding, for the peculiar people, both privileges and responsibilities, to the simple covenant of sacrifice. These, along with the new covenant secured by the

blood of Calvary, have afforded covenant opportunity to the human race from the beginning until now.

II.—GOD'S COVENANT WITH MAN HAS IN EVERY  
INSTANCE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FOR  
THE FAMILY.

Every sin and sorrow on this blighted earth is evidence that the covenant was "made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity."

That the covenant of atonement by means of sacrifice was available and adequate for parental hold, is proved by the cases of Noah and Job.

When Noah was about to take possession of the emptied earth, we see him gathering his family about him, and offering to God the most complete sacrifice it was in his power to offer. Not one lamb, nor seven lambs, but one representative of each of the clean beasts. (That must have meant one of each of the animals allowed of God for sacrifice, for animals were not heretofore given to man for food.) This was evidently meant to be the most complete sacrifice possible.

What was the burden of the prayer that went up with the ascending smoke, that carried a "sweet savor" up to God? From the shape of the answer we can certainly discover the shape of the prayer. Noah knew his sons. He knew by this time some of the characteristics of Ham. He knew that sin was in the blood of these young men, and he feared that there might be in the case of his own descendants another wholesale declension from God, and then another Deluge. Is it any wonder that he "fled for refuge" to the completest sacrifice it was possible for him to offer, and sent up such a prayer of faith with the ascending smoke that God "smelled a sweet savor"? God honored that covenant prayer for a household, and gave an answer as complete as the sacrifice—even a fresh covenant of protection and blessing, sealed by the beautiful token of perpetual faithfulness, the bow in the clouds.

Job took hold of the covenant of atonement through the bloody sacrifice in behalf of his children. He feared sin among those happy young feasters, and so he "fled for refuge to lay

hold of the hope set before him," the covenant of sacrifice, where he saw adequate hold for parental faith. Job said, "It may be my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Therefore, he "offered burnt offerings, according to the number of them all." "Thus did Job continually." It is plain that he rested in that covenant as adequate to the occasion, for when all his children were suddenly swept into eternity there was no wailing and no fear. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

That the covenant made with Noah was available for the family requires no proof, beyond the unmistakable wording of its announcement, "I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you, and with every living creature that is with you."

That the covenant made with Abraham was available for the family, again requires no proof. Every Bible student could pile up proof on this point. This is indeed the very core of the covenant made with Abraham. That which as regarded the simpler sacrificial covenant of patri-



archal days, may have been almost an undiscovered truth, was taken up by God Himself and made the pre-eminent glory of the covenant with Abraham. (Gen. 17. 7.)

Is the new covenant, secured, not in answer to the smoke from any earthly altar but "by the precious blood of Christ" shed on Calvary and continually presented by the great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens for us—is this covenant narrower than any that had gone before it? Such a thing is scarcely conceivable, but this is the point in the whole discussion, and no proof can be accepted but proof from the Word of God.

Notice first, that each of the three great Old Testament covenants is a God-arranged type of that covenant which was yet to be the glory of the Church of Christ. Now, if, when these earlier covenants are all available for the family, the new covenant is not so available, then these types, in this their common feature, do not represent the anti-type; they over-present it. They are strong where it is weak. They give covenant hold to parental faith, while it

does not. This is not like God's artistic work, for the anti-type in any respect to fall short of the type.

2. But we have it distinctly stated (Heb. 8. 6) that Jesus Christ, at His Father's right hand, is Mediator of a "better covenant," which is established upon "better promises." If the new covenant is not available for the children, then there is one point which may seem in a parent's eye the most important point of all, in which it is not "better" than the old, but deplorably inferior.

3. If the new covenant is available for the family, we would expect that a matter so emphatically made plain concerning the Abrahamic covenant, would not be left out of the prophetic exhibitions of the Covenant of Grace.

So far as I am aware, there is no place in the Old Testament where the terms of the new covenant and the conditions of life under its administration are more distinctly foretold than in the 30th and 31st chapters of Jeremiah. In chapter 30, 20th verse, in the midst of a strain that is full of Messiah and His reign, there are these words: "Their children shall be as afore-

time." If this means what it seems to mean, that the children in these days of spiritual blessing, shall occupy their old place as fellow-members with their parents in the household of God, then the word is most aptly and beautifully placed. What else it can mean in that connection is not apparent.

Chap. 31, verse 1 runs thus: "At that same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people." Here is the very crowning promise of the new covenant broadly announced in favor of "all the families of Israel."

Then, in the 34th verse, the promise at the very heart of the new covenant contains these words: "For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them." Is it hard for a parent to find all his children, great and small, placed wittingly by God Himself in this, the heart of our great spiritual Magna Charta? These words may include the rich and the poor, the exalted and the lowly; but first and most naturally, they signify the big and the little, me and all my children. From these pro-

phetical statements it is easy to understand what Peter meant when he said : " For the promise is unto you and to your children."

4. Let us now look to see if this family principle, so prominent in Old Testament history and in prophetic forecasts of New Testament times, is also the actual working principle of the New Testament Church.

When Christ says, " Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," does He not in general terms really announce as a fact, that little children have a recognized name and place in the kingdom of God upon earth ? This may not be counted proof that the new covenant is available for parental faith, but it is broadly in keeping with that view.

When Peter, on the day of Pentecost, was asked the question, " Men and brethren, what shall we do ? " his answer is remarkable in its explicitness, " Repent and be baptized, every one of you, . . . for the promise is unto you and to your children." He tells plainly who are to be baptized into the new kingdom ; it is " every

one of you " who repent, and, lest that word should be limited so as to exclude the little children of these believers, he makes plain its meaning by the added word, "For the promise is unto you and to your children."

From the mouth of Paul we have repeatedly the announcement of the same family principle. When the Philippian jailor asks, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved," so full is the apostle of the household character of the faith that he cannot answer so simple a question without introducing it. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." The jailor took him at his word, and he and all his were baptized straightway. Lydia's household also was baptized. So was the household of Stephanus.

In beautiful keeping with the foregoing is Paul's word of encouragement given in cases where there was one believing parent and one unbelieving. Surely the children in such a household must be counted a mongrel flock, and must be considered outside the pale of the visible Church? Not at all. The words are as clear as



words can be. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean but now are they holy."

Is there not abundant Scriptural ground for conclusion No. 2. That God's covenant with man has in every instance been made available for the family, the new covenant not one whit less than the older ones, and so much "better," because established upon "better promises," even charged with life everlasting.

But there is a third conclusion that needs to be recognized as true before the Shorter Catechism view of baptism can be intelligently accepted.

III. *If we have a covenant with God available for our children, then we have in that covenant ground of absolute confidence (not merely hope in the ordinary sense of that term, but confidence,) of securing for our children the blessings covenanted to them, to the extent to which we lawfully lay hold of that covenant for them.*

Surely this proposition needs only to be stated to be accepted. If God has covenanted to do



certain things for our children, and we have lawfully laid hold of that covenant, what shall we next do but watch for the fulfilment "as those that watch for the morning," sure of its coming as of the rising of the sun.

To a parent who has so laid hold of God's three covenant promises for his little child, baptism for it is emphatically the right thing in the right place. To him it signifies and seals the engrafting of that child into Christ, its partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace and its engagement to be the Lord's. Baptism for the child is then a visible token and seal of an actual transaction of faith between God and the parent. This transaction of faith may be as real a thing as that which took place in Jerusalem when David took back God's promise to himself and sealed it with the words, "Do as thou hast said," as real a transaction of faith as that which took place in the hill country of Nazareth, when Mary sealed the marvellous message of the angel with the words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word."

Some may object to such confidence as sure to

lead to carelessness in doing the parent's part. The same danger has been apprehended from the assurance of faith concerning our own salvation. But facts tell against the objection. It will be found that parents who rest upon God's covenant for their children and who have learned to draw from its fulness will have grace to train their little ones as no others can.

Some will object that such a view means that all children of all believers shall be saved, and there are unmistakable facts that speak powerfully in a different direction. If, first, all Christian parents knew that they have a covenant; if, second, they also knew that all the three glorious promises of that covenant are available for their children; if, third, they were all to take time to know the content of these promises; if, fourth, they were to master and continuously practise the art of drawing upon the wealth they contain for the spiritual poverty of themselves and their children—then, *but not till then*, shall all the children of all believers be saved.

The sorrowful thing is that, in the case of most Christians, this Covenant of Grace lies in

their hands actually as a dead letter. It is like a cheque for untold wealth which an ignorant man might carry about with him all his life without knowing either its meaning or its use, and so losing altogether its value. But for the Shorter Catechism, many Christians would hardly know of the existence of the new covenant. They do not know its terms, or the fact that it is a veritable charter of rights, which they have in Christ—rights which, through the blood that has secured them, they may boldly and gladly claim for themselves and for their children. This “secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.” “The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

### *RALPH ERSKINE AND THE COVENANT.*

What this mighty Scottish preacher thought of the covenant, and how he made use of it, can be seen in the following extracts. They are taken from a noted sermon, entitled, "Faith's Plea upon God's Word and Covenant." The text is the plea put up in the 74th Psalm, "Have respect unto the covenant."

III. Let us shew what it is in the covenant that God hath respect to, or that we should plead.

1. "Have respect to the covenant," that is, to the Mediator of the covenant. Though thou owest no respect to me, yet hast thou not a great respect to the Mediator of the covenant; to Christ, whom thou hast "given to be a covenant of the people." . . . It is a strong plea

to urge with God, the respect He bears to Christ : God cannot get over such a plea as that.

2. Have respect to the covenant by having respect to the blood of the covenant. . . . Now, Lord, have respect to that blood that sealed the covenant. Since the condition is fulfilled to thine infinite satisfaction, let the promised good be conferred on me.

3. Have respect to the covenant by having respect to the oath of the covenant. The promise is confirmed with the oath of God, "that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation." Now, Lord, wilt Thou not have respect unto Thine own oath ?

4. Have respect to the covenant by having a respect to the properties of the covenant. . . . Lord, have respect to the fulness of the covenant, and let me be supplied, for there is enough there. Have respect to the freedom of the covenant, and let me, however unworthy, share of the grace that runs freely thence. Have respect to the stability of the covenant, and let me be pitied, though unstable as water and in-

firm, yet Thy covenant stands fast. Have respect to the order of the covenant. Though my house be out of order, and heart out of order, and my frame out of order, and all be in confusion with me, yet, according to thy covenant, order all things well.

V. We shall shew why God will have respect to His covenant; and, consequently, whence it is such a suitable plea and argument for us.

1. When He has respect to the covenant He has respect to Himself, the framer of it. . . . Why then the strength of the plea is, "Have respect to the covenant," and so have respect to Thyself, and thine own glorious name and attributes, and let them be glorified in shewing regard to the covenant.

2. When He hath respect to the covenant, He hath respect to His Son, Christ, the centre of it, and in whom it stands fast, as He owns. "My covenant shall stand fast with Him." Why, the plea is, "Have respect to the covenant," and so shew respect to Thy Son. . . . Oh, strong plea!

3. When He hath respect to the covenant, He



hath respect to His Spirit, the great applier of the covenant blessing, and executor of the testament. Why then the strength of the plea is, "Have respect to the covenant"; that is, have respect to Thine own Spirit that He may get the glory of applying, by His power, what Christ hath purchased by His blood.

VI. We shall make some application of this subject.

1. Hence, see a mark and character of true believers. They are of God's mind. He hath a respect to the covenant, and they have a respect unto the covenant, and hence they know what it is to plead with God upon the respect He hath to the covenant. They could not do so if they had not a high respect for it themselves. They have such a respect to it in kind as God hath. . . . They have such an everlasting respect to the covenant, that when they have nothing in the world to hold to, they will hang by the covenant, and hold fast such a promise, and plead upon it, saying, "Have respect to the covenant."

2. Hence we see the misery of those that are

unbelievers and remain "strangers to the covenants of promise," and have no respect to the covenant. It is misery enough that God has no respect to you ; no respect to your person or your prayers, as it is said, "To Cain and his offering God had no respect." . . . You have no respect to God while you have no respect to that which He respects so highly.

3. Hence we may see the happiness of believers, that have such a respect to the covenant as I was speaking of : a great, dear, full and perpetual respect to it, and to the Mediator of it ; who have taken hold of the covenant through grace, and who know what it is to take hold of God in the covenant, to take hold of God in a promise, and hold Him by His word, and hang upon Him in it, saying, "Lord, have respect to the covenant." This is your great happiness, God hath respect to you. . . . God hath a respect to you. . . . He hath made you "kings and priests to your God." Jacob was crowned prince on the field of battle, the field of prayer, when he wrestled with the angel and prevailed as a prince. The poor, wrestling

man is a prince, and the poor, wrestling woman is a princess, in God's sight. "This is the honor of all the saints." They have power with God, and therefore, no wonder that they have "power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron." . . . God hath a respect to you, and He will shew it in due time, because He hath a respect to the covenant, and fills your heart with a respect to it also.

4. Hence, see the duty incumbent upon us in pleading with God for His favor, presence and blessing. Let us go to Him crying, "Lord, have respect to the covenant."

I know not a case you can be in but the covenant exhibits a cure, and you are allowed to plead it. After many new covenant promises, it is said, "For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them," and how are we to enquire except by pleading the respect He hath to the covenant? Have you a polluted heart with the filth of sin?—a polluted conscience with the guilt of sin? Why, here is an article of the covenant: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all

your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." O then go to God for cleansing, and plead, saying, "O, have respect to the covenant!"

Have you the old, hard, stony heart still within you? Here is an article of the covenant: "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you an heart of flesh." O, then, go to God and plead it, saying, "Have respect to the covenant."

Are you destitute of the Spirit, sensual, not having the spirit? Do you find such a want of the Spirit that you cannot walk in God's way? Well, there is an article of the covenant here, "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes." Oh, plead for this great blessing, and say, "Lord, have respect to the covenant."

In a word, when you consider what kind of a sinner you are, consider also what kind of a covenant this is; it is enough to say it is a covenant of grace, of all sorts of grace, for all sorts of sinners that are out of hell. . . .

Are you in darkness and ignorance, having no knowledge of God? Here is a covenant of enlightening grace, saying, "They shall be all taught of God." O, then, plead it, saying, "Have respect to the covenant."

Are you under deadness, and like dead, dry bones? O, here is a covenant of quickening grace, saying, "I am come to give life, and to give it more abundantly. The hour cometh, and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." O, then, plead that He may "have respect unto the covenant."

Are you in confusion, and know not what way to take? O here is a covenant of directing grace, saying, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known, I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." Are you under sad plagues and soul diseases, overrun with sores from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot? O here is a covenant of healing grace, saying, "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His

wings. I am the Lord that healeth thee. I will heal thy backslidings." O, then plead, saying, "Have respect unto the covenant."

Are you in extreme fear of hell and damnation, because of your sin and guilt? O here is a covenant of delivering grace! "Deliver his soul from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom." O, then, plead it and say, "Lord, have respect unto the covenant."

Are you in bondage unto sin, Satan and the world—a captive unto lusts, and shut up in unbelief as in a prison? O, here is a covenant of liberating grace, proclaiming liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Are you a stupid soul that cannot move towards God, nor stir heavenward, by reason of a backward will, like a brazen gate that resists all force of moving means? Well, but here is a covenant of drawing grace, saying, "When I am lifted up I will draw all men unto Me." As the virtue of the loadstone draws the iron, so the virtue of an exalted Christ draws the iron bar of the will. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy



power." O, then, plead it, saying, "Have respect unto the covenant."

What other concerns have you? Are you concerned for your children, that they may be partakers of covenant blessing, and be saved of the Lord? O here is a covenant of extensive grace, entailing blessings on us and our offspring, saying, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed. O, then, look to God in behalf of your children, saying, "Lord, have respect unto the covenant." . . .

Are you concerned about inward enemies, spiritual enemies, and molested with the powers of darkness? Is your heart full of the habitations of cruelty, and fearfully inhabited with cruel devils, cruel lusts, cruel corruptions, that master and conquer, and prevail against you, so that you lie many a time wounded and dead at the enemy's feet? O here is a covenant of sin-conquering grace, not only a covenant of mercy to your soul, but of vengeance to your lusts, saying, "The day of vengeance is in mine heart, the year of my redeemed is come." O, then, cry down the promised vengeance on all

your cruel soul enemies, saying, "Lord, have respect unto the covenant."

Are you concerned about your soul-poverty and indigence, not only oppressed with enemies without and within, but oppressed with wants and necessities, being absolutely poor and needy, and destitute of all good? O here is a covenant of soul-supplying grace, and of all needful provision, saying, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." O, then, plead as the psalmist does in the verse following the text: "O, let not the oppressed return ashamed, let the poor and needy praise Thy name." "Have respect to the covenant."

In a word, let your case be the worst case out of hell; this covenant contains all salvation as a covenant of grace, of all sorts of grace for all sorts of sinners, and of all sorts of cures for all sorts of cases; and if you can get yourself wrapped within the bond of this covenant by

believing and pleading it, then you draw God upon your interest, so that your concern is His concern, your interest is His interest, your cause is His cause, as the psalmist shews here, "Arise, O Lord, plead Thine own cause." It stands upon His honor, and He will do His own work in His own time, for He will rather work marvellously and create new worlds, rather turn all things to nothing, than quit His concerns in or give up with His "respect unto the covenant."

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Here is what God has said about His word: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Here is what He says about the messengers who carry His word out into the world, and may it not be as true of a book as of a preacher?

“Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace, the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”

And here is what He says about the results to be seen along the track of the messenger: “Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” The fruits shall shew whether there is a real message from God in this little book or not.





